

Iran envoy to World Bank 'deported'

NICOSIA (AP) — Tehran said Tuesday that a member of an economic team that travelled to the United States last week for meetings with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund was arrested on arrival in Washington, sent to jail and then deported. The official Islamic Republic News Agency said Hajjatoleslam Hussein Shahroudi had a valid U.S. entry visa, which he had obtained from the U.S. consulate in Paris. U.S. officials said the visa was erroneously issued and was revoked. The Iranian agency said that on arrival in Washington April 26, Mr. Shahroudi was arrested by immigration officers, who confiscated his passport, interrogated him and then led him to a state prison. The next day, said IRNA, Mr. Shahroudi was transferred to an Immigration and Naturalisation Service plane and then escorted to the airport where he was put on a hand-cuffed man bound for Germany. An hour into the flight, a steward Mr. Shahroudi as saying in an interview. U.S. Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) spokesman Duke Austin said the State Department had issued the visa "but then they sent out an alert to us that the visa had been revoked."

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Saddam calls for Vatican help

NICOSIA (AP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has urged the intervention of the Vatican to lift United Nations sanctions imposed against his country after its invasion of Kuwait, the official Iraqi News Agency reported Tuesday. Cardinal Achille Silvestrini, the Vatican's prefect for the Oriental churches who was visiting Iraq on a Middle East tour, met separately Monday with President Saddam and Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, the agency said. It said Mr. Silvestrini conveyed to the Iraqi leader "a verbal message from Pope John Paul II." The discussions, said the agency, focused on the "injustice inflicted on the Iraqi people as a result of the stands of certain hostile states..." President Saddam told the cardinal that the U.N. economic sanctions should have ended after Iraq relinquished Kuwait. "Did the Iraqi children fight in Kuwait? Did old people and women fight in Kuwait?" President Saddam was quoted as saying. "Then where are the human rights that people talk about? I hope you take information to the Pope about hospitals in Iraq to see how children die because of the lack of food and medicine, and because of the lack of sterilized water; and all of this happens in spite of the fact that the Iraqi army is not in Kuwait anymore."

Sarid to attend meeting in Morocco

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Environment Minister Yossi Sarid has accepted an invitation to a conference in Morocco, and Arab League member which has no official ties with the Jewish state. "He received the invitation and on the 24th and 25th of May he will be in Casablanca," Mr. Sarid's spokeswoman said Tuesday. The World Bank has invited Israel to attend a 20-nation conference in Casablanca to launch a programme to protect the Mediterranean environment, the semi-official Moroccan daily Le Matin said Tuesday. It was the first time Israel was invited to an official function in Morocco.

Russia tests second submarine for Iran

DUBAI (R) — Russia has started sea trials in the Baltic of a second submarine for Iran which is expected to be delivered before the end of the year, Western sources in the Gulf said Tuesday. "The second Kilo-class (submarine) has rolled out of the factory and is currently being tested at sea," a senior Russian naval officer said. Iran took delivery in November of the first of three submarines ordered from Russia, raising an outcry from its neighbours concerned at an escalation of the regional arms race and from Western powers fearing a threat to oil supplies.

Kinkel in Syria

DAMASCUS (AP) — German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel arrived Tuesday at the start of a fact-finding mission that will also take him to Egypt. On his first visit to Syria, Mr. Kinkel was greeted at the airport by his Syrian counterpart, Farouk Al Sharaa. The two drove straight downtown for talks at the foreign ministry. In an airport statement, Mr. Kinkel said he believed "there will be a tangible progress in the Washington peace talks... and we in Germany attach great importance to these talks and to their tangible outcome."

6 missing Kuwaitis found in Iraq

KUWAIT (AP) — A Kuwaiti man and his five young brothers and sisters, who disappeared four weeks ago, have been found in Iraq and will be repatriated soon, the deputy prime minister said Tuesday. Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah interrupted the parliament's weekly session to announce that the six were in Basra and would be brought home by the International Committee of the Red Cross Wednesday or Thursday. The official thanked Moroccan King Hassan II for mediating with Iraq for the release of the Kuwaitis, including two small children. He would not give reporters further information about how they got to Basra. Saud Al Mkhaiter, 21, left his parents' home in a small car with his sisters and brothers for a drive on April 8. They were not heard from since.

Demirel confirms candidacy

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel officially confirmed his candidacy Tuesday for upcoming presidential elections, representing the right-wing True Path Party. Mr. Demirel's announcement, made to the True Path Party's parliamentary group, followed a meeting Sunday with coalition partner Erdal Inonu, leader of the centre-left Social Democratic Populist Party (SDPP), at which Mr. Inonu gave his support for Mr. Demirel's candidacy. The SDPP's continued support depends on Mr. Demirel maintaining the right-left coalition if elected, according to editorials in the Turkish press.

Hariri in Qatar

DORA (AP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri arrived Tuesday on the last leg of a swing through the Gulf where he has been seeking help in restoring normalcy to his country after 15 years of civil war. A joint statement on his talks issued in Oman as he moved to Qatar said the sultanate has decided to reopen its embassy in Beirut "out of desire to bolster the efforts of the Lebanese government to foster stability in Lebanon, its unity and its sovereignty."

Israelis kill 7 in Gaza in 24 hours

GAZA CITY, Occupied Gaza Strip (AFP) — Israeli soldiers shot dead two brothers Tuesday as seven Palestinians were killed in 24 hours, the heaviest toll since Israel sealed the occupied territories in late March, Arab sources said.

Another 25 more Palestinians were wounded during a Gaza Strip strike in memory of four Palestinians the army shot dead Monday.

Two brothers were riddled with bullets by troops disguised as Arabs driving a car with Gaza Strip plates, witnesses said. They were hit in the head and chest as they talked in the shade of an olive grove at Maghazi refugee camp, south of Gaza City.

Yusef Abu Mussen, 25, and Jonaa Abu Mussen, 30, were buried immediately in a funeral which spanned a mass demonstration against Israeli occupation. At Shati camp on Gaza's seacoast, soldiers shot dead a protester after they were stoned. A six-year-old boy has also been described by doctors as clinically dead and a nine-year-old has seriously hurt.

And a Palestinian shot in the

head on April 26 in Nablus on the occupied West Bank, died of his wounds in hospital Tuesday, Palestinian sources said.

Meanwhile, a Palestinian on Tuesday stabbed and lightly wounded a 50-year-old Israeli vegetable merchant at Beit Lahia on the strip, military sources said.

At least 25 Palestinians were wounded by bullets in clashes at Shati, Khan Yunes and Gaza City, correspondents reported, as trouble erupted over the killing Monday evening of four Palestinians.

The group of four died near Bureij camp during curfew hours Monday.

They were trying to flee after allegedly ramming an Israeli roadblock, military sources said. But a Palestinian doctor who examined the corpses said they had been shot in the face and chest at very close range, suggesting they had not been fleeing.

They were suspected of attacking army patrols and killing Palestinians who allegedly collaborated, a military spokesman said. False identity papers were found in the car, but the men

were not carrying arms, he added.

Shops closed and black flags flew over houses across the strip as the population mourned the deaths.

Since the army sealed the territories at the end of March, 25 Palestinians and one Israeli civilian have been killed.

The leadership of the intifada, called Tuesday on Palestinians to keep Jews out of the occupied territories as a riposte to the ban on Palestinians entering Israel.

"Keep all Israelis and the herd of settlers off Palestinian state land by stepping up the intifada," the underground leadership urged in a communique.

Palestinian "forces" and the people should make a joint effort to increase the resistance against occupation," it said.

The communique told Palestinians and international aid workers not to seek special permits from the Israelis to enter Jerusalem.

The leadership called for Palestinians to try to force Israeli road blocks en masse on Saturday to reach the Holy City.

King says increased exchange of views among ulemas can help Islam, Muslims

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday stressed the importance of meetings between Islamic ulemas and scholars, saying that such meetings and rapprochement contribute to serving the faith and Muslims.

King Hussein noted that Muslims rally around the principles of Islam despite their different opinions and judgements.

The King was speaking during a meeting with Muslim ulemas and scholars gathered at the Hashemite Palace to discuss rights in Islam.

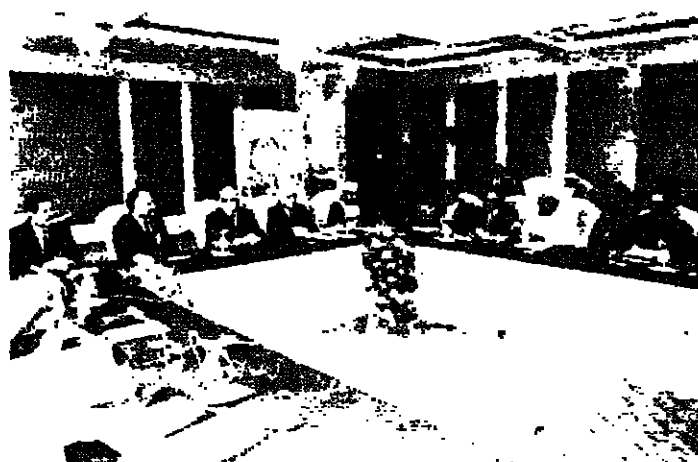
King Hussein expressed his happiness and that of Jordan's government and people for hosting the groups of ulemas in Jordan and voiced hope that their discussions and deliberations

would come up with concrete results that would serve Islam and Muslims.

Addressing the gathering, organised by the Royal Academy of Islamic Civilisation Research (Al al Bait Foundation), King Hussein called on ulemas not to withhold advice and right opinion particularly when such opinions crystallise as a result of brotherly discussions and deliberations.

King Hussein stressed the importance of the right and reasonable presentation of Islam to the world and said he pinned great hopes on the Amman meeting and future meetings to come up with great achievements serving Islam and Muslims the world over.

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His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday meets with religious scholars attending a conference in Amman (Petra photo)

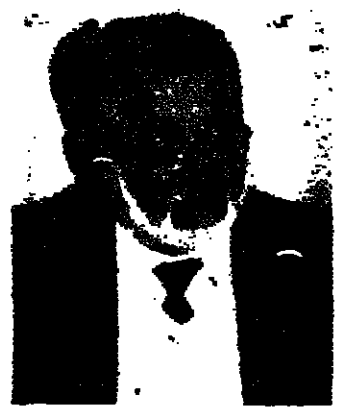
Brotherhood studying its options and moves

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's largest and most influential political party is readying itself for all possibilities in the event that the government decides to alter the elections law before elections for the country's 12th Parliament are held later this year.

The Islamic Action Front (IAF), the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, is carefully drafting its election policies while awaiting the government's position on the new parliamentary elections before it decides on which and how many of its members will contest the next elections, IAF President Ishaq Al Farhan told the Jordan Times.

Government officials have been non-committal on



whether a change in the law is in the making, only confirming that the cabinet of Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker will not deal with the law, and all issues pertaining to the elections will be tackled by the transitional gov-

ernment that will succeed it. In what was the most substantive comment by any Jordanian leader on the issue, His Majesty King Hussein said last week that a change in the elections law was "still under consideration."

"This is still under consideration. Whether a change to the elections law... whatever will enable Jordan to move further," the King told Reuters in response to a question on whether the next elections will be held under a one-man-one-vote formula.

In an earlier remark, when he accepted the resignation of former Prime Minister Mudar Badran in the summer of 1991, King Hussein said the elections law needed to be changed in order to allow more active popular participation in the polls.

Cabinet members said it will

be against the methodology of the current government to address the law or the elections due to the presence of a large interest group within its ranks. Ten ministers of the 26-member cabinet of Sharif Zeid are deputies and a conflict of interest, said one government source, will arise if the government makes any decision on the elections.

A new government that will oversee the elections is expected to be formed soon; the change has awaited the completion of the Kingdom's celebrations of the 40th anniversary of King Hussein's assumption of his constitutional powers, which was marked Sunday. Cabinet members contacted by the Jordan Times, however, would not speculate on the date of the resignation of Sharif Zeid's government, nor will they comment on who is expected to form the next one.

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Sales tax law may have to await next cabinet

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The introduction of a controversial sales tax could be put off until after an expected cabinet reshuffle or change in government since members of the council of ministers are deeply split over the issue, informed sources said Tuesday.

The sales tax, which ranges in value between five and 20 per cent depending on the nature of the product, is expected to lead to price increases in the market despite the fact that it will be instituted in place of the consumption tax which has been in force for the past two years, local businessmen say.

But, according to officials who support the tax, there will not be an overall increase in the cost of living in the first year after its introduction be-

cause the application of the law will lead to both reductions and increases in prices that will cancel themselves out.

Traders and consumers alike are, however, hoarding goods in anticipation of the new levy, according to reports that appeared in the local press recently.

The general feeling in official circles is that the sales tax has not been properly presented to the public and therefore not understood well and hence the controversy and opposition that it has drawn. Furthermore, political groups have also used it as a weapon to entice supporters, officials say.

The measure was supposed to have gone into effect on May 1 with the government enacting a temporary law under which the sales tax would replace the consumption

tax levied from Jordanian industries.

Few details of the exact rates of tax are available. In general, however, basic foodstuffs, medicine, school supplies, and most essential needs of children are excluded from the tax, according to officials familiar with the law. Items seen as semi-essential will be taxed at five per cent, and the rate will go up to 20 per cent for goods classified as luxury products.

The temporary law has been drawn in its near-final form and is awaiting a "few touches here and there" in the Council of Ministers, according to the sources.

But "differences among members of the Cabinet coupled with the dispute between the government and the private sector aborted the introduction of the sales tax effective May 1," said one of the sources.

According to this source, opposition to the imposition of the law came from ministers who are also members of Parliament seeking reelection in the general legislative polls expected this year.

"Obviously ministers who are also deputies do not want to jeopardise their reelection chances by being seen as having endorsed a move that led to price increases in the market," said the source. "They understand the government's obligation to impose the tax but obviously prefer that the move comes after they leave the Cabinet."

Under the election law, Cabinet members and government officials have to relinquish their posts before filing nominations for election. Ten

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Rabin, Peres clash on Jordan-Palestine link

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Israel's oldest political rivals, clashed Tuesday over future Palestinian self-government. Officials played down the differences that emerged in separate interviews to Israel's leading daily Yedioth Ahronoth. Mr. Rabin, 71, and Mr. Peres, 69, are Labour Party oldtimers jostling for power for two decades.

The more dovish Peres launched the debate, urging an acceleration of Arab-Israeli talks in Washington and an eventual confederation between Jordan and the nearly two million Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories.

Mr. Rabin, an ex-army chief who seized party leadership from Mr. Peres and returned Labour to power last year, said he opposed moving too quickly and any talk now about the final status of the territories could only "blow up" the talks.

"A confederation is unacceptable to me, and in general... why relate to a subject that is not on the agenda and is not the government stance?" Mr. Rabin asked. Talks with the Palestinians are centred for now on an interim period of limited self-rule with

negotiations on the final status due to begin three years into self-rule.

"I am ready to give the Palestinians administration of areas such as health and education, and municipal matters, while security matters are controlled by us," Mr. Rabin said.

"I don't see the permanent solution in a confederation, since a confederation is between two sovereign states. Whoever says a confederation between Jordan and the Palestinians, says first of all a Palestinian state, and I oppose that," he said.

Mr. Peres told the paper Israel faced two decisive weeks in the negotiations and they must be accelerated. But Mr. Rabin said it was a mistake to expect a resolution so soon.

"If somebody wants to finish quickly, to give the other side everything, it's possible to finish quickly," Mr. Rabin said. "I don't intend to do that."

After winning election last year, Mr. Rabin put off making Mr. Peres his foreign minister until nearly the last moment. Years ago, in the thick of their rivalry, he labelled Mr. Peres an "indefatigable saboteur."

(Continued on page 5)

Mideast economic talks open in Rome

ROME (AP) — A Palestinian delegate to talks on the Middle East's economy Tuesday condemned Israel's expulsion of 400 Palestinians last December and its sealing off of the occupied territories.

Israel called the comments, which came in opening remarks at two-day discussions here, regrettable and said it wanted to "remain very firmly" on the route to economic cooperation.

The talks in Rome are one of five sets of discussions on specific areas designed to involve all parties of the Middle East and dozens of other states under the framework of the peace initiative launched in Madrid in 1991.

Bilateral talks between Israel, the Palestinians and Arab states are going on now in Washington, Syria and Lebanon, saying Israel must withdraw from their territory that Israel occupies.

During the morning session, World Bank officials gave an outline of their work so far on a study of the economy of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"There was a rough estimate that one may need to generate up to \$1 billion over five years" for development in the territories, Jacob Frenken, co-chairman of the Israeli delegation, told reporters (see page 2).

Later, a World Bank official confirmed such a figure had been raised but only as an indication of how substantial the needs are and declined to name a specific number.

The official, Harinder Kohli, said a World Bank team had visited the occupied territories in January and February. It found "significant needs for improvement" in the water supply, transportation system and health care, he said.

Hardship for the population has grown with the closing off of the occupied territories, which has prevented more than 150,000 people from going to work, said Yusef Sayegh, an economic advisor to the Palestinian delegation.

The World Bank study will concern garbage and sewage management, roads, worker training and other infrastructure matters.

The delegations are discussing those sorts of issues plus improving telephone systems, linking power grids, easing the path of tourists and building a canal project linking the Red and Dead seas in ways that would involve various countries in the area.

Israeli helicopters rocket South Lebanese village

NABATIYEH, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israeli helicopters rocketed a house in a village of South Lebanon on Tuesday, wounding five civilians, security sources said.

They said two helicopters fired four rockets into Kfar Tibnit village just outside Israel's self-declared "security zone" in the south. Guerrillas of the pro-Israel Hizballah are active in and around the village.

The sources said five people were wounded when two rockets hit a two-storey house, doing extensive damage. Two other rockets slammed into fields in the village, breaking windows in nearby houses.

A Hizballah official said the wounded were members of the Tabaja family and had no links to the group.

Security sources said two guerrillas were killed and eight people were wounded in three separate encounters.

At midnight (2100 GMT), Hizballah fired Katyusha rockets into the "security zone."

The Israelis struck back with a tank cannon barrage, killing the two fighters. No casualties were reported in the Katyusha barrage.

Nearly three hours after the helicopter assault, Hizballah said in a communique that its guerrillas attacked two Israeli army outposts in the security zone, "inflicting direct hits and destroying an enemy military vehicle."

The communique said mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns were used in the two-pronged assault on Beit Yahoun and Haddatha.

It made no reference to the fighters reportedly killed in Yomnor.

Security sources said 11 Hizballah, trained in ninja warfare, attacked both outposts, which were manned by Israeli-affiliated south Lebanon Army (SLA) militiamen.

U.S., France to send units to Bosnia force

PARIS (Agencies) — The United States and France agreed Friday to press ahead with sending peacekeepers into Bosnia if a peace agreement holds up, sidestepping a decision on using military force against Bosnian Serbs.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said after five hours of talks that "urgent" consultations would be held on military measures only if the agreement signed by Bosnian Serbs on Sunday falls apart.

Mr. Christopher has encountered resistance in London and now Paris to President Bill Clinton's tentative decision to use a combination of air attacks on Serb artillery and the easing of an arms embargo against Bosnian Muslim-led government.

Mr. Christopher, in a joint news conference with French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, said, "I think we found common ground to implement" the U.N. peace plan to end the fighting, establish a provisional government in Sarajevo and divide Bosnia into 10 ethnically based can-

tons. It would reward the Serbs with much of the territory they gained in a 13-month war on Muslim cities and villages. An estimated 134,000 people are dead or missing.

Mr. Christopher also held talks with President Francois Mitterrand, Premier Edouard Balladur and Defence Minister Francois Leotard. He then departed for Moscow for talks with Russian leaders.

Mr. Juppe said the forces of most major countries would participate in a peacekeeping operation "that includes the United States and France."

Mr. Christopher said U.S. troops would be dispatched to the Balkans to help enforce a "good-faith" peace agreement among rival ethnic factions.

He said the Clinton administration would explain the move to the American peoples as "one of the principal, important peacekeeping efforts in Europe, probably ever."

Yemeni leader hopes democracy will better relations with West

DUBAI (R) — Yemen hopes that its fledgling democracy will lead to better relations with the West. President Ali Abdullah Saleh was quoted Tuesday as saying.

"We think that democracy is the key for new relations between Yemen and the new world order, the western countries and the United States," Mr. Saleh said in an interview with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) newspaper Al Khaleej.

Mr. Saleh's ruling party won a clear majority in last week's general elections, taking 121 of the 301 parliamentary seats in the first free multi-party elections since North and South Yemen merged three years ago.

Yemen strained its relations with the West and its Gulf Arab neighbours over its sympathetic attitude towards Iraq during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis over Kuwait.

Yemen's stand angered the wealthy Gulf states, depriving it of vital sources of aid and remittances.

Mr. Saleh said relations with the Gulf were improving.

There have been recent signs of Yemen breaking its regional isolation and its top officials have visited several Gulf states.

The United States and European Community (EC) congratulated Yemen on successfully holding the elections. Washington said it was looking forward to working with whichever government is formed.

Asked whether the United States was putting any conditions on economic and political cooperation with Yemen, Mr. Saleh said: "The only preoccupation of the American administration is the relationship between Yemen and Iraq."

"We have informed them that we cannot be split from the Arab body and that Iraq is part of this Arab body and an inseparable part of the Arab Nation...and that there are interests and common links," he said.

"We told the Americans that if there is an American-Iraqi animosity now, there will come a time when this will end and they will have good relations," he added.

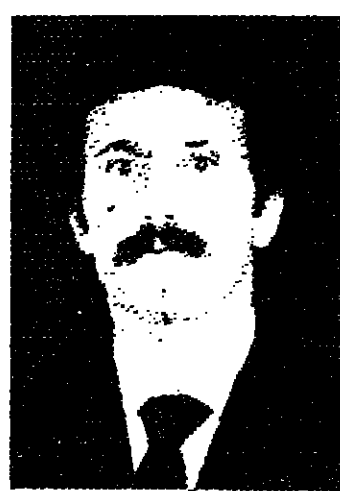
The largely underdeveloped country of more than 14 million people at the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula is racked by lawlessness, unemployment, annual inflation of about 100 per cent and a budget deficit of \$2.1 billion.

Mr. Saleh said Yemen's foreign debts amounted to \$7 billion and that the country had not received any new loans since North and South Yemen merged three years ago.

Mr. Saleh hoped the new democratic system in Yemen would attract more foreign investment. "The outside world has been waiting for the results of the elections to see the nature of the new system...now that has been defined."

He said he wanted Yemen's new government to be formed by the three leading parties in the elections — his General People's Congress (GPC), the former Marxist Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) and the Islamists of the Yemeni Gathering for Reform (YGR).

The GPC and the YSP had



Ali Abdullah Saleh

been ruling Yemen jointly in a 50-50 partnership since the May 1990 merger.

The YSP won 56 seats but says that 13 of its members won seats as independents, making it the second largest party in parliament. The YGR won 62 seats.

The European Community praised Yemen for having taken a "bold and important step" towards democracy.

The EC said in a statement: "The recent elections in Yemen constitute the completion of a bold and important step towards Yemen's democratic goal."

World Bank studying \$1b in Palestinian aid

By Saleiman Al Khalidi

Reuter

AMMAN — The World Bank is considering a \$1 billion and package to develop the occupied territories during interim self-government, according to a Palestinian delegate to multilateral Middle East peace talks.

The World Bank is moving in the direction of recommending allocating \$1 billion to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, said Samir Huleihel, a senior member of the Palestinian team to the multilateral economic talks resuming Tuesday in Rome.

He told Reuters the bank would seek final internal approval for aid to cover a five-year interim period of self-rule being negotiated with Israel in the main Middle East peace talks.

The money would help develop the infrastructure of the occupied territories, where economic development has been limited by a quarter century of Israeli occupation and the last five and a half years of Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule.

Under the terms of the U.S.-brokered Arab-Israeli talks which resumed in Washington last week, interim self-government would be followed by a negotiated final status for the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Huleihel said the World Bank was also preparing a separate \$30 million package for feasibility studies on structural improvements which would be implemented if Israel and the Palestinians reach agreement on interim self-government.

"These studies are going to be critical in directing foreign investment and aid in the most needy infrastructure sectors," he said.

late Monday before leaving Jordan for Italy.

Mr. Huleihel said at least 21 regional economic cooperation projects were to be discussed by European, Japanese and U.S. delegates to the talks in Rome Tuesday and Wednesday.

He said the World Bank had since December sent five teams to the occupied territories to assess infrastructural obstacles and needs and was expected to submit a technical report by June.

Mr. Huleihel said Palestinian negotiators believed there had been a shift in approach by international bodies and agencies towards them.

"They are dealing with us as a parallel government in the making," he said, adding that international aid was increasingly being directed away from services and relief to productive sectors such as agriculture and small industrial projects.

A Palestinian development fund to funnel foreign aid for infrastructural projects to local councils was expected to begin operating at the end of 1993 and already had a pledge of financial support from the European Community.

Europe provided more than half the estimated \$100 million the occupied territories received in foreign assistance in 1992, Mr. Huleihel said. U.S. aid was also on the rise with \$25 million pledged this year from \$13 million in 1992.

Mr. Huleihel said extensive U.S.-sponsored training programmes involving hundreds of senior Palestinian administrators were under way in the occupied territories after being agreed at previous rounds of the multilateral talks.

Probe opens into British arms sales to Iraq

LONDON (AP) — A judicial inquiry opened Tuesday into allegations that the British government connived in illegally selling Iraq, Margaret Thatcher and her successor, Prime Minister John Major, lead the list of those expected to be called to testify.

For Mr. Major, the public inquiry marks the return of a problem shelved. The airing of charges that Britain helped Iraq right up to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 casts a new shadow over his conservative government.

Mr. Major and his cabinet ministers have acknowledged the charges are serious. But Mr. Major says he knew nothing about the sales or any informal relaxation of the government's embargo against arming the combatants in the Iran-Iraq war. Opponents say he is lying.

The furor broke Nov. 9 with the collapse of the trial of three

British executives of the Iraqi-owned Matrix Churchill Corp., based in Coventry, England.

The company was reportedly identified by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1989 as part of Iraq's network to procure arms. U.S. customs officials shut down a Matrix Churchill branch in Solon, Ohio, in September 1990.

The British executives were cleared of illegally exporting arms-making machine tools to Iraq between 1988 and 1990 after former Trade Minister Alan Clark told the court that he encouraged the sales.

Tuesday's inquiry, presided over by Appeal Judge Lord Scott, opened with testimony from another retired politician, Sir Richard Luce.

A Foreign Office minister in 1985 when the British arms ban went into effect, Mr. Luce was

the warm-up act in an inquiry likely to last through September — with the big names coming on towards the end.

Mr. Luce testified that in 1984 the government faced pressure to change its policy of selling only "non-lethal" equipment.

"We wanted to get a sensible posture, because the approach of the last two or three years had got increasingly difficult to defend," Mr. Luce said.

Lady Thatcher, who was prime minister when the arms sales took place, has made no public response to an announcement by Mr. Scott that he expects her and Mr. Major to testify.

Mr. Major, who succeeded her in November 1990 and held top cabinet posts in her administration, has promised to give evidence. He will be the first serving prime minister to testify in public.

The inquiry, announced by Mr.

Major last year, will go back to 1984 and include British participation in Iraq's plan to build a 131-foot gun. In April 1990, British customs officers seized nine sections of tubing for the gun, which the manufacturers had said was agricultural machinery.

Since November, dozens of previously secret documents have pointed at least to rule-bending in the late 1980s with the Trade Department pushing a "more flexible" approach on arms exports.

Polls in November showed most Britons thought government ministers were lying in denying knowledge of sales — what became known as "Iraqgate."

There are also signs, however, that many Britons take a relatively relaxed view of arms sales to dictators on grounds that America, France and other Western countries also do it.

U.S. military hands over Somalia operation to U.N.

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — The U.S. military command in Somalia officially handed over Tuesday to a United Nations mission headed by Turkish General Cevik Bir.

U.S. General Robert B. Johnston, commander of the multinational United Task Force (UNTF), handed over to Gen. Bir, 54, in a 30-minute military ceremony in Mogadishu early afternoon.

The ceremony ended American command of efforts by tens of thousands of troops from a score of countries to protect relief operations for the starving people of the Horn of Africa and disarm its warring clans.

The pale blue flag of the United Nations, with its white olive branches and globe, was hoisted to flutter over the U.S. embassy building, now headquarters of United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) at 2:05 p.m. (11:05 GMT).

Gen. Johnston declared that Operation Restore Hope, which began with the arrival of U.S. marines here on Mogadishu beaches on Dec. 9, had been a "successful mission."

Gen. Johnston praised the work of multinational force, which have safeguarded food convoys and virtually ended the starvation, civil war and death by disease that claimed an estimated 350,000 lives last year.

"We need to thank the 19- and 20-year-olds in uniform... who by their poise and discipline and patience and good judgement truly did make it all possible," Gen. Johnston said.

But he said a lot of work remains for the U.N. force, which will include more than 4,000 Americans who are staying behind for about a year.

"Yes, there are still bandits out there," Gen. Johnston said. "The future of Somalia is in the hands of Somalis."

After handing over their duties to Pakistanis, Botswanans and Moroccans, Gen. Johnston and a contingent of U.S. forces immediately left for the trip back to the United States.

Soldiers, sailors and Marines have been leaving by the plane load over the past two weeks, flying home to bases in California, New York, Texas and other states.

Khartoum, rebels turn down Nigerian Sharia proposal

ABUJA (AFP) — Sudanese government and rebel delegates both rejected a compromise proposal by Nigerian mediators on imposing strict Islamic law in Sudan, but peace talks will continue, negotiators said Tuesday.

The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), fighting for a secular Sudan, turned down the Nigerian suggestion that Sharia should not be applied to hundreds of thousands of southerners living in the Muslim north for an unspecified period.

SPLA delegates said, however, that Sharia, which has the main sticking point in the talks, should still be on the agenda.

"We do not want a law that governs the relationship between a state and individuals to be derived from a religion," SPLA delegation spokesman Nhial

Deng Nhial declared.

"We want Sharia to be a personal law, which Muslims would submit to voluntarily, and not a state law. In other words, we want a return to the pre-1983 situation, before the government imposed Sharia," he added.

Since that year, the SPLA in the mainly animist and Christian south has been battling successive Khartoum regimes, at a cost of hundreds of thousands of lives. Relief agencies say more than two million people in the south face famine.

The government spokesman, Planning Minister Ali Haj Mohammad, declared: "Our compromise to the SPLA is that we shall not make Islam the religion of the state of Sudan."

He stressed that "the principle of secularism is not Sudanese."

The SPLA denied that the south of Sudan had already been exempted from Sharia law for more than a year, as the Khartoum junta led by Omar Hassan Al Beshir has stated.

"People who were until recently linked with the government say that in fact Sharia still applies in the south," Deng Nhial said.

"A southern member of the government resigned a few days ago, giving among his reasons the fact that the Khartoum government had broken its promise not to apply Sharia to the south."

The SPLA also contests the division of Africa's largest nation into nine northern and three southern regions, citing the presence of hundreds of thousands of southerners in the north.

Previous Nigerian-sponsored

talks in June 1992 broke down after the two sides failed to reach a compromise on the religious issue and the government rejected an SPLA proposal for the creation of a confederal state.

This year, the talks went ahead after a series of prior agreements.

The junta accepted a demand from the leader of the mainstream SPLA, Colonel John Garang, that the heads of dissent factions of the rebel movement not be allowed to attend the Abuja talks.

It also renewed an offer of an amnesty to the southern rebels and before the talks began, Col. Garang declared a unilateral ceasefire.

Nigeria itself has a mixed Muslim-Christian and animist population.

Britain 'knew of Iraq arms route'; Jordan warns against being made scapegoat

JORDAN'S ambassador to Britain has said that the British government knew and approved of an arms supply route to Iraq in run-up to the Gulf war, in breach of its own guidelines.

Fouad Ayoub, the Jordanian ambassador in London, said that vital parts for Iraqi tanks were supplied by Britain to Jordan, which then passed them on to Iraq.

He said he would be prepared to give evidence to Lord Justice Scott's inquiry into the arms-

to-Iraq affair, which starts next week, if Britain attempted to make Jordan a scapegoat. His allegations are supported by a former senior Foreign Office official. The inquiry, set up following the collapse of the Matrix Churchill prosecution last year, will investigate breaches of British government guidelines banning the supply of "dual-use" equipment, which could be used for military or civil purposes, and breaches of export laws.

Mr. Ayoub, speaking on

BBC Radio's Special Assignment programme said: "It is no secret that during the years of the Iran-Iraq war many countries, including Western countries and Arab countries, were keen to see that Iraq's military capability remained undiminished."

"Jordan operated within this context and as such helped to purchase and send arms and equipment to Iraq. Those arms and equipment were financed by other Arab countries and done with the full approval of Western

powers and other Arab nations."

Defence equipment supplied to Jordan in 1985 under a \$270m deal signed by Margaret Thatcher was sold on to Iraq to update 200 British Chieftain tanks captured from Iraq in the early 1980s. Spare parts for Chieftain armoured recovery vehicles were also sold directly to Iraq.

Mark Higson, a former Foreign Office official who oversaw export licences from defence equipment manufac-

turers and dealers, told the BBC of the Jordanian link: "It wasn't as though we were deliberately trying to arm Iraq through a third country, but the fact that it was happening and we were aware of it might have been let to go by."

He said the government knew that equipment that could be used for lethal purposes was going to Jordan and could be sent on to Iraq.

The Liberal Democrats' defence spokesman, Menzies

Campbell, said: "These reports add to the already overwhelming evidence that the British government was a knowing party to the supply of arms to Iraq in the period before the Gulf war."

Lord Justice Scott will question Baroness Thatcher and John Major over the guidelines on exports to Iraq and also over their possible involvement in decisions relating to the traffic of arms and related material — The Independent.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwait moves bachelors from family areas

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait municipal authorities are demanding expatriate bachelors move out of the city's so-called "model areas" — suburbs where Kuwaiti families form the majority of residents, a newspaper reported Tuesday. Members of parliament and community leaders have complained that a post-Gulf war rise in the proportion of foreign bachelors in the country's reduced total population has led to an increase in harassment of women, rape and use of alcohol. The Arab Times said Kuwait municipality Monday had told landlords that electricity to the properties could be cut and they could be fined 500 dinars (\$1,650) if the properties were not vacated in terms of a law which took effect Saturday. The law was not vacated in terms of a law which took effect Saturday. The law was not vacated in terms of a law which took effect Saturday.

Two Iraqis seek haven in Kuwait — paper

KUWAIT (R) — Two Iraqis have sought sanctuary in Kuwait, saying they were army deserters who had quit because they were hungry, Al Anba newspaper said Tuesday. "A patrol of one of our border posts caught two persons dressed in military uniforms who claimed that they were with the Iraqi army," the newspaper, quoting security sources, reported. "The two men, walking on foot, said when questioned...that they had run away because they don't have food." The two men said without explanation that they had informed their army superiors they were going to cross the frontier. The Iraqis asked that they be taken care of by Kuwaiti authorities and said they would be executed for desertion if returned to Iraq, the newspaper said. The newspaper did not say when the incident happened or in which part of the recently demarcated 207 kilometres land frontier.

Saudis deny reports of riots by refugees

DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia (R) — Saudi Arabia has denied Iraqi charges that refugees at a camp in northern Saudi Arabia had fought Saudi guards with clubs and knives in a riot in which several refugees were wounded. Ibrahim Hamad Al Hazah, the emir (governor) of Rafha province in which the camp is located, was quoted Tuesday as telling the Okaz newspaper that the camp close to the Iraqi border had not witnessed any disturbances. "Our Iraqi brothers at the camp lead a quiet life and are provided with all services," he was quoted as saying. Iraq said in April that the refugees, many of them opposed to the Baghdad government, had staged a demonstration and burnt down a building and some shops in the camp market. But it did not say when the incident took place or why. The camp at Rafha holds about 28,000 Iraqis, some of them former prisoners-of-war who refused to go home after the Gulf war over Kuwait. The others took refuge in Saudi Arabia after fighting in southern Iraq between the Iraqi army and rebels. Saudi Arabia has said that up to February last year, it spent \$400 million on the upkeep of the refugees. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata was quoted after visiting the camp in January this year as saying she did not hear any complaints from the refugees. But Saudi newspapers quoted her as saying that the refugees expressed concern about their own futures if Iraqi President Saddam Hussein remained in power for long. Many of the refugees stranded at the remote camp have sought asylum in third countries but few have been able to leave as countries around the world tighten conditions for accepting asylum seekers. Baghdad has attributed charges of maltreatment at the camp to a trickle of refugees who have returned home with the help of the Red Cross.

Aid ship adrift off African coast

MOGADISHU (AFP) — A cargo ship chartered by the aid organisation World Concern has issued a distress call and is adrift in the Indian Ocean off the Somali-Kenyan border, U.N. officials said Monday. The ship, the MSV Basra, was 25 kilometres south of the border between the two countries when it issued the Mayday call overnight Sunday, said Adishwar Padarath, spokesman for the U.N. peacekeeping operation here. The message was received by Belgian forces of the U.S.-led multinational force in the southern port city of Kisumu, 400 kilometres southwest of Mogadishu, he said. The U.S.-led UNIFIL force is currently handing over to a United Nations Operation, UNISOM-II. The spokesman said the aid ship, which called for assistance from the Kenyan navy, was loaded with relief supplies and water. No other details were available, he added.

Poles pass on Iraqi response on American

BAGHDAD (R) — The Polish embassy in Baghdad has passed on to the U.S. State Department the results of its contacts with the Iraqi authorities in the case of an American oilman who went missing in Kuwait last week. "I informed the State Department on all the developments of the case. They are to decide what information should go to the press," Jan Pekarski, who heads the U.S. interests sections at the Polish embassy, told reporters Tuesday. Mr. Pekarski declined to give further details. The Iraqi government has not said whether it is holding the oilman, Kenneth King Beatty, who was last seen about 20 kilometres south of the Iraqi-Kuwait border. Mr. Pekarski said Monday he was in touch with the Iraqi authorities for word on Mr. Beatty's whereabouts. The United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (Unikom) in the demilitarised zone along the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border looked for Mr. Beatty but did not find him. It has also asked Baghdad to help find the American.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Documentary

19:00 News in French

19:15 French Varieties

19:30 News in Hebrew

20:00 News in Arabic

20:30 Chance in a Million

21:00 Spotlight

21:30 Voyager

22:00 News in English

22:30 The Gravy Train Goes East

PRAYER TIMES

04:16 Fajr

05:42 (Sunrise) Dhuha

12:52 Dhuhr

16:12 Asr

19:25 Maghrib

20:00 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624390

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terracotta Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 822824, 654922

Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

A drop in temperatures will take place and winds will become westerly moderate. Also clouds will appear at various altitudes and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain. In Aqaba, it will be dusty and winds will be southerly fresh and seas rough.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 9 / 20

Aqaba 18 / 29

Deserts 7 / 21

Jordan Valley 12 / 27

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 25, Aqaba 32. Humidity readings: Amman 21 per cent, Aqaba 11 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Saad Ali 788285

Dr. Walid Al Masi 675485

Dr. Bassim Qaddoudi 648633

Dr. Ghaleb Zawadeh 736011

Firas pharmacy 661912

Perdons pharmacy 718336

Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Natrouk pharmacy 623672

Al Salan pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 646465

Shameer pharmacy 637660

Natrouk pharmacy 623672

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Fayez Al Qudbi ()

Al Quda pharmacy ()

ZARQA:

Dr. Issa Al Omari ()

Khalid pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 751221

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630521

Hotel Complaints 605830

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Amman Municipality 787111

Complaints 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Abdell Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 615615

Electric Power 661176

HOSPITALS

Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 06-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 06-53200

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6

Al-Nahla Maternity, J. Amn 643412

Ishai Amman Maternity 642362

Mallat, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4

Shmeisani Hospital 669121

University Hospital 840845

Al-Munir Hospital 667279

The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Infanta, Al-Muhajreen 771013/3

Al-Basir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26

Army, Idara 891611/5

Queen Alia Hospital 02240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:

Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarga National Hospital (09)90560

Dr. Samir (09)98732

Dr. Hima Modan Hospital (09)99990

IRBID:

Princess Sumra Hospital (02)75555

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)5200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00 Aden (RJ)

06:45 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:00 Aqaba (RJ)

10:30 Jeddah (RJ)

11:30 London, Berlin (RJ)

12:30 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)

12:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

18:00 Istanbul (RJ)

18:30 Colombo (RJ)

21:15 New Delhi (RJ)

21:45 Riyadh (RJ)

22:00 Damascus (RJ)

22:45 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)

23:45 Sana'a (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:45 Beirut (ME)

07:45 Rome (AZ)

08:30 Damascus (PT)

09:15 Beirut (ME)

11:25 Cairo (MS)

11:30 Sana'a (TV)

13:40 Jeddah (SU)

15:45 Damascus (PT)

18:00 Paris, Damascus (AF)

20:50 Rome (RJ)

21:45 Beirut (ME)

22:00 Basra (Makassar)

22:45 Vienna, Larnaca (OS)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:45 Aqaba (RJ)

08:15 Brussels (RJ)

10:30 London, Berlin (RJ)

11:30 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)

12:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

18:00 Istanbul (RJ)

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18:00 Paris, Damascus (AF)

20:50 Rome (RJ)

21:45 Beirut (ME)

22:00 Basra (Makassar)

22:45 Vienna, Larnaca (OS)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700 / 700

Banana 480 / 480

Beans (Makassar) 620 / 620

Beans 540 / 430

Cabbage 40 / 40

Carrot 150 / 90

Cauliflower 250 / 180

Cucumber (large) 120 / 80

Cucumbers (small) 300 / 180

Eggplant 240 / 180

Garlic 200 / 200

Green peas 240 / 180

Leek 300 / 50

Marrow (large) 80 / 50

Marrow (small) 150 / 100

Mint 80

Onion (dry) 230 / 160

Onion (green) 280 / 180

Orange 400 / 250

Pepper (hot) 450 / 350

Pepper (sweet) 200 / 120

Potato 210 / 160

Tomato 320 / 200

Spinach 250 / 200



Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday attends the annual ceremony in honour of students participating in the Charitable Plaster Fund (charity box). The ceremony was held at the Palace of Culture in Al Hussein Sports City. The fund, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) conducts a student project throughout the schools to provide for the poor and the needy. The project enables students to donate to the charity box, and the money is distributed among the less privileged students during the academic year. Following a folkloric dance and song performance by a group of school children, the Queen distributed honorary certificates to school principals and students (totaling 62 schools) participating in the programme. The Queen was received by the president of the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), Abdullah Al Khathib.

JEPCO's union employees to get pay increases, better conditions

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The General Union of Workers (GUW) employed by the Jordan Electric Power Company (JEPCO) Monday expressed pleasure at a verdict passed by the Industrial Court endorsing their rights and ruling that the workers should receive better pay and acquire better working conditions.

Walid Khayat, the union president, said "though we are pleased with the verdict issued last Thursday, the union will pursue all efforts within the law in order to ensure further gains for the workers."

"We believe that the court's verdict was balanced and achieved some gains for the majority of the workers, and I am pleased with the decision of the court. But there is no doubt that the union will seek ways to further improve working conditions and pay," said Mr. Khayat in a telephone conversation Monday with the Jordan Times.

The court, convened at the request of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker following the failure of a series of meetings through the Ministry of Labour to bring about an agreement between the JEPCO management and the union.

"It took the court two whole months to reach the verdict, which most importantly stressed the need for a great measure of harmony between the union and the management to ensure continued service," Mr. Khayat said. "All workers dealing with electric power and cables, including engineers and technicians, will receive a JD 20 a month pay increase, others among the total 2,070 JEPCO workers will receive a monthly allowance of JD 15," the union president said.

"Furthermore, the court ruled that GUW workers should receive compensation for their work prior to 1980 when they came under the umbrella of the social security scheme, and the compensation should be paid at the rate of a month's salary for every year in service," he added.

Mr. Khayat said the union started action against the management last October when it became clear to the union that the management had started to harass the workers, implement arbitrary transfers, issue unjustified warnings and threats and impose penalties. The Labour Ministry set up an arbitration panel which failed to reconcile the differences and disagreements and had to refer the matter to the court.

"The court has now ruled that no arbitrary dismissal shall take place, nor can the management dismiss any worker while he/she is ill or undergoing treatment for injuries sustained on the job," he added, "Furthermore, the court has asked that the management make available a nursery for female workers' children under six years of age," said Mr. Khayat.

The extra allowance, he said, was demanded by the union in view of the dangerous work in which these union members are involved.

"According to the terms of the concession granted to JEPCO by the government in 1947, JEPCO workers ought to get the best pay and best work conditions compared with other workers in Jordan, in view of the nature of their work," Mr. Khayat said.

JEPCO management recently introduced the one fil per kilowatt surcharge on each subscriber's bill, thus raising an extra JD 1.5 million annually.

As a result, Mr. Khayat said, JEPCO has now paid all its dues and distributed dividends at the rate of 15 per cent to its shareholders.

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The students also enjoyed shopping in Jordan, saying they particularly liked haggling with the merchants. "It was interesting that we could haggle with shopkeepers. Here, unlike in England, they give in very easily," said young Martin Duckworth.

All of the students agreed that there are many wreckless drivers in Jordan, who do not even care to fasten their seat belts, they remarked.

They also pointed out that Jordanians tend to smoke cigarettes more than the British, noting that anyone in Jordan can buy cigarettes regardless of his/her age, but in England, rules are stricter and tobacco is sold only to those above the age of 16.

One of the most striking impressions by one of the students was that he believed Amman to be greener than England. Mr. Cutler commented by saying that in Amman there is spacing between houses, whereas in English cities buildings are everywhere.

All of the visiting students appreciated the hospitality accorded to them by everyone, particularly their host families.

One student, Robert Drapper, said he would like to visit again, adding that his colleagues who declined to come with the group "do not know what they are missing."

Government to cut spending by 5%

AMMAN (J.T.) — Government departments have been instructed by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to reduce their overall operational spending on allocations earmarked in the 1993 fiscal budget by five per cent.

The move was deemed necessary to help make up for the amount to be paid by these departments to their employees in a recent cost of living increase approved by a Royal Decree and made effective on January 1, 1993, according to a senior government official who preferred anonymity.

The government made the retroactive payment of the salary increases this week, but announced that the total annual amount needed to cover the increase was estimated at JD 73 million.

The official said it is hoped that the five per cent savings would make up for the needed amount in accordance with the prime minister's instructions.

He said the following categories will be exempt from the five per cent reduction:

- allocations for medicine and consumable medical equipment and relief services,
- allocations for school textbooks,
- allocations for projects under contract, and
- allocations for rent.

The prime minister demanded that government offices supply the Budget Department with a list of the areas where the savings will occur.

Creditors review loan facilities to farmers

AMMAN (Petra) — The Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) last year gave farmers up to JD 15 million in loans, but according to Minister of Agriculture Fayez Khasawneh farmers tend to seek additional lending sources to help finance their operations.

The ACC has limited lending resources and therefore farmers and cooperatives are increasingly turning to merchants, capital-holders or financiers for their borrowing needs, the minister said Tuesday in an address at the opening of a technical seminar on simplifying loan granting measures to farmers.

Organised by the ACC in cooperation with the Near East, North Africa Regional Agricultural Credit Association, the seminar is tackling issues related to credit for farmers, collecting dues and handling matters related to loans to farmers and agricultural cooperative societies.

Dr. Khasawneh told the audience that loans obtained from sources other than the ACC reached up to 25 per cent of the total estimated value of production in 1992 amounting to JD 30 million for all growers combined.

Jordan's overall agricultural production in 1992 was estimated at JD 500 million, according to Dr. Khasawneh.

He said that farmers need to borrow at least 10 per cent of the total value of their production, but their actual overall borrowing amounted to three per cent last year which means that the ACC has to come up with more funds to meet farmers' needs.

The opening of the three-day seminar was also addressed by Mansour Ben Tarif, the ACC director general, who outlined the main task of the 280 employees in his department, which deals mainly with credit to Jordanian farmers and conducts research on farmers' credit needs.

The ACC has already prepared its 1993-1997 five-year-plan, which envisages no more than JD 15 million in annual credit facilities to local farmers, said Mr. Ben Tarif.

But, he said, an individual farmer can obtain up to a JD 6,000 loan compared to JD 2,000 previously.

In its drive to benefit the largest number of farmers, the ACC has been directing its attention to small farmers giving them priority in obtaining loans; and in 1992 small farmers accounted for 62 per cent of the total number of borrowers, Mr. Ben Tarif added.

A total of 30 participants — all directors of ACC departments — are attending the seminar.

Jordan to urge UNRWA against recent fee levies

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan, which is taking part in the advisory commission meeting of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) due to open in Vienna Thursday, will re-state its position vis-a-vis the agency's recent measures concerning its budget deficit, according to Adel Irshaid, head of the Foreign Ministry's Palestinian Affairs Department.

Jordan will reiterate its rejection of any reduction in UNRWA's services to Palestinian refugees and its opposition to the levying of fees on agency school children, said Mr. Irshaid in a statement Tuesday before his departure for Vienna.

Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber had earlier expressed Jordan's views concerning the agency's measures to cover its estimated \$28 million deficit in its 1993 budget.

According to Mr. Irshaid, the deficit in the budget, the agency's emergency programme for Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied Arab lands and in Lebanon, as well as other difficulties facing the agency are on the agenda of the two-day meeting which is to be attended by Arab countries hosting Palestinian refugees and several foreign nations and major donors to the agency's budget.

The Jordanian delegation will demand that UNRWA Commissioner General Ilter Turkmen urge the donor nations to increase their contributions to the agency, especially as the Arab countries have recently expressed desire to make contribution to UNRWA, said Mr. Irshaid.

He said the delegation will also submit a full report on the needs of the Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in light of the current difficulties caused by the continued occupation.

In addition, the Jordanian delegation will reiterate a demand that the agency move its headquarters to the field of its operations in Middle East with a view to reducing expenses, said Mr. Irshaid.

Jordan, he added, will also propose that the agency purchase its food and other needs from the Jordanian markets where it can get lower prices for high quality products.

Apart from Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, the Vienna meeting is to be attended by representatives of the United States, Japan, Sweden, Italy, Belgium, France and Turkey.

Meeting concurs Jordan lacks comprehensive population policy

By Sausan Ghosheh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Academics concurred Monday, that Jordan lacks a comprehensive population policy and strategy.

At the closing session of the "Population Changes and Development Policies" conference, organised by the Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) at the University of Jordan, professor of communications at Yarmouk University said: "We need clear and objective developmental, political, environmental, social and economic policies. We need an integral planning policy."

Ahmad Hamouda, a professor of demography at the University of Jordan, stressed that Jordan "needs a government institution specialised in population issues and able to issue executive decisions."

He also called on the CSS to formulate a planning strategy outlining the problems, their root causes, all the elements and factors of these problems and their solutions.

In addition, Dr. Hamouda said that scientists need to focus their efforts in producing qualitative research, operational research and policy-oriented research, and minimise on the quantitative research, which has been the focus so far. He suggested concentrating on demographic studies on the inter-relationship between population changes and social, economic, political and security changes.

Tayseer Abdul Jabbar, former minister of labour, suggested the creation of a committee that will address the recommendations of the conference.

Dr. Bahouth added that the CSS should study the recommendations of previous conferences related to this issue.

Two sessions took place in the morning. The first, entitled "Population Changes and National Security and Strategy in Jordan," minimised the direct effect of the size of the population on foreign policy.

Musa Breizat, professor of political science at the University of Jordan, was unable to attend but sent his paper in which he said the population composition is a salient factor that influences foreign policy. But, he added that "the nature and magnitude of the salient factor is less determined by composition and structure than by a function of intervening variables that have to do with factors and elements that constitute foreign policy."

Abdel Karim Fayez, a professor of demography at the University of Jordan, stressed that the strength of the country is not determined by the absolute size of the population. The national power potential for each country, according to Dr. Fayez, is determined by the level of technology in that country, the size of the productive population between the ages of 15-64, the natural resources and the size of the country.

The second session, entitled "Population Policies in Jordan," stressed the need to develop operational policies and added that there are "national" policies, they are contradictory.

In this session a case study was presented by Issa Masarweh, a professor of demography at the University of Jordan, portraying a "conflict" between the goals of the policies and the means.

Emphasising the role of the media in family planning, Mohammad Saraya, president of the Centre for Jordanian Studies at Yarmouk University said the "media should work with and through social institutions" and adopt "education through entertainment" methods in order to deliver the message.

Nawal Kalkideh, a member of the National Committee for Population, stated that Jordan's population policy should be to control immigration, because, he believes, it is the major population problem in Jordan, not the birth rate.

The conference, according to Mustafa Hamameh, the director of the CSS, was held to present a new approach to population analysis.

But Dr. Bahouth said the "standard of the conference was less than I expected... the level of discussions and suggestions was not stressed. We addressed issues that were said before."

Still, many of the organisers for the conference maintained that the lack of financial assistance hindered the ability of the conference from reaching its desired goal.

Dr. Hamameh pointed out that the criticism that arose was a "healthy phenomena."

U.N. fact-finding team 3-day ends tour

AMMAN (J.T.) — A 14-member United Nations fact-finding mission Tuesday wound up its three-day visit to Jordan and left for Cairo on the second leg of a Middle Eastern tour to gather information about the situation in the occupied Arab territories.

The mission, headed by the ambassadors of Sri Lanka, the former Yugoslavia and Senegal, had conducted talks with Adel Irshaid, head of the Foreign Ministry's Palestinian Affairs Department, and visited the King Hussein Bridge to meet with Palestinians crossing into Jordan from the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

The mission, which is to report on its findings in the region to the U.N. General Assembly, heard a report submitted to them by Mr. Irshaid on the deteriorating conditions of Palestinians in the occupied Arab lands in view of the ongoing siege imposed on them by the Israeli authorities.

Noting that sealing off the occupied territories, arbitrary punishment were causing further economic difficulties, Mr. Irshaid called on the United Nations to intervene and end such practices.

At the King Hussein Bridge, the U.N. team listened to accounts by Palestinian travellers and local Jordanian officials of inhuman treatment of Palestinian travellers by the Israeli authorities.

Formed in 1968 by the General Assembly, the U.N. mission has, to date, submitted 24 reports to the world organisation, outlining continued Israeli violations of the Palestinian people's human rights.

The U.N. mission has been barred by Israel from entering the occupied territories to conduct investigations into Israeli practices there.

27 British students delight in 12-day Jordan holiday

By Samir Barhoum
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A group of British students on a 12-day visit to Jordan today leaves the Kingdom carrying back with them delightful memories of their stay.

The students, from the Baisall Common Primary School near Birmingham, arrived in Jordan as part of an exchange programme with the New English School (NES) in Amman. They described Jordan as a lovely country, and its people as very kind and generous.

During their stay, they visited Petra, Jerash, the Dead Sea, Azraq, Mount Nebo, Ajloun, Salt and two factories in Amman.

The 27 students, aged between ten and 11 years old, told the Jordan Times that the country is quite different from their own country, describing it as great source of interest.

"People were stopping us outside Amman to have photos taken with us everywhere we went," they said.

Accompanying the children were their teachers Philip Cutler, Rosemary Reid and Bob Reid, who said this large group of young school children always attracted onlookers.

NES Director Ophelia Bishony said the visit was a good experience for both sides, saying the visiting children had the chance to meet with foreign people and know other cultures, and besides that students at NES had the chance to practice English.

Next year, she said, the NES will send Jordanian students from families who hosted the visiting British children to England, as part of the exchange programme.

"The NES also plans similar programmes with schools in other parts of the world, mainly in Arab countries," Ms. Bishony said.

NES Primary Headmistress Hana Shihab expressed her joy over having students from England come on such a programme.

"We enjoyed having them with us and we hope to see them come back to Jordan again," Ms. Shihab said.

Also, NES Deputy Director Roger Foreman commended the exchange programme and expressed gratitude to families that hosted the students, paying tribute to the Ministry of Tourism, which offered facilities to the visiting group.

"During last week's holidays," he said, "we were able to go with the host families on trips and it was a very rewarding experience for both sides."

One British student, Hannah Wood, said she was impressed with the places she visited, adding that the Kingdom has unique archaeological and tourist attractions.

The students also enjoyed shopping in Jordan, saying they particularly liked haggling with the merchants. "It was interesting that we could haggle with shopkeepers. Here, unlike in England, they give in very easily," said young Martin Duckworth.

All of the students agreed that there are many wreckless drivers in Jordan, who do not even care to fasten their seat belts, they remarked.

They also pointed out that Jordanians tend to smoke cigarettes more than the British, noting that anyone in Jordan can buy cigarettes regardless of his/her age, but in England, rules are stricter and tobacco is sold only to those above the age of 16.

One of the most striking impressions by one of the students was that he believed Amman to be greener than England. Mr. Cutler commented by saying that in Amman there is spacing between houses, whereas in English cities buildings are everywhere.

All of the visiting students appreciated the hospitality accorded to them by everyone, particularly their host families.

One student, Robert Drapper, said he would like to visit again, adding that his colleagues who declined to come with the group "do not know what they are missing."

Pharmacists review 135 papers at meeting in Irbid

AMMAN (J.T.) — Participants in the first international Middle East conference on pharmaceutical sciences held at the Jordan University for Science and Technology (JUST) Tuesday heard two lectures by specialists from the United Kingdom and Egypt at the morning session.

According to Ahmad Kofahi, the conference's rapporteur, a total of 12 working papers from four Arab countries, the United Kingdom and the United States also reviewed in the morning session.

He told the Jordan Times that in the afternoon session the delegates reviewed papers dealing with medicinal chemistry, pharmaceutical technology, clinical pharmacy, pharmacology and therapeutics.

The papers were presented by participants from Jordan, four other Arab states, and the U.S. and India.

The three-day meeting, which was opened by JUST President Kamel Ajlouni, is expected to review 135 working papers by the participants on various pharmacology issues.

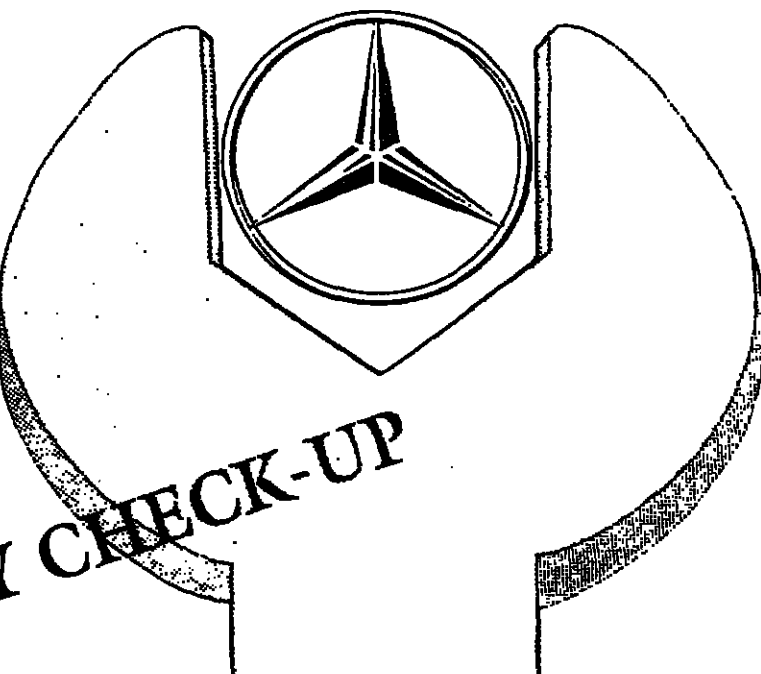
In addition, three workshops and 11 lectures were planned, dealing with drug industries, the teaching of pharmacy and medicinal herbs among other topics, according to Mr. Kofahi.

In his opening address, Dr. Ajlouni said there was a need to reappraise the role of pharmacists in complementing the medical services.

Dean of JUST's Faculty of Pharmacy Najib Najib said the conference reflected the university's continued efforts to ensure researchers' cooperation towards developing the pharmaceutical profession.

Dr. Najib, who is also a member of the organising committee, said that renowned international experts who offered outstanding contributions in the field of pharmaceutical education and research are attending the conference.

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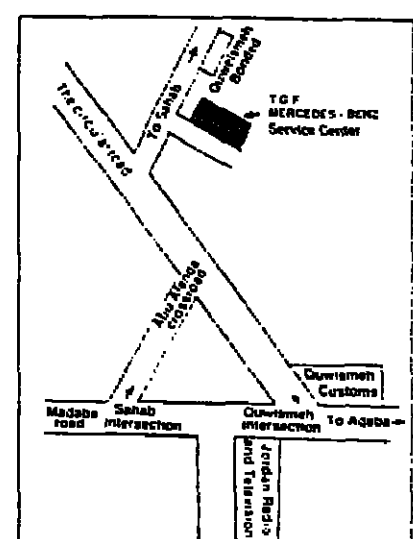
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HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Cabinet approves pay raise for municipal staff
AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Tuesday approved a JD 15 personal allowance increase for municipal staff effective Jan. 1, 1993; the draft bilateral air transport agreement between Jordan

and China. Jordan's participation in the International Labour Organisation's Conference in Geneva in June; and the formation of a Jordanian delegation to the meetings of the European Broadcasting Union in Barcelona.

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Economic Forum

Economic growth and import control

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

Ponder the following equation:

$$Y=C+I+X-M$$

This is what we call the national income identity where, Y stands for national income or gross domestic product (depending on whether you include factor income in X and M), and C=consumption expenditures; I=capital formation; X=exports; M=imports.

The equation means that national income rises as exports (of goods and services) rise and exactly by the same amount. But it also means that national income drops as imports drop and also by the same amount.

The equation, very simply, but very conclusively, suggests a way to boost economic growth, that is by cutting imports. The business of augmenting growth through bolstering exports is a very tedious task. It does not only entail building capital formation, that is production facilities which create goods and services demanded by the rest of the world, but also breaking into foreign markets through stiff competition put by other countries and thereafter keeping these markets against perpetual attacks from other producers.

Cutting imports offers a very easy way out. In 1992, Jordan's imports of goods and services stood at around three billion dinars. If Jordan cuts these imports by, say, JD 100 million, its gross domestic product (GDP) will be boosted by JD 100 million. This

cut will translate into a 3 per cent growth in GDP, which is quite a good rate by development standards. If our target is more ambitious, an extra effort to cut imports by another JD 100 million will give us a 6 per cent growth rate which is remarkable and compatible with all economic reform objectives.

Imports fall into three broad categories: consumer goods, raw materials and capital goods. In 1991, the most recent year for which detailed data on imports is available, consumer goods formed 43 per cent of aggregate imports of goods, raw materials formed 40 per cent of them, with the balance, 17 per cent, going to capital goods.

What is suggested in the above analysis is to compress consumer goods by shaving away certain segments of luxury imports but leaving raw materials and capital goods untouched. Imports of consumer goods amounted to JD 728 million in 1991. If they are to be compressed by only 10 per cent, around JD 72 million will be wiped away. This brings us to the first growth target of around 3 per cent.

Imports of raw materials and capital goods are generally treated as essential inputs for the production process and consequently are not subject to compulsory reduction. However, the consumption of raw materials can be rationalised as to eliminate waste and extravagance. In the particular case of Jordan, 36 per cent of raw materials are made up of oil and fuel; waste and extravagance in

the consumption of oil products are an undisputed fact of life, meaning that there is room for compressing even the imports of raw materials which can therefore contribute to the fine-tuning of our economic growth.

When it comes to classification, imports of capital goods are really a messy category. An imported fridge will be classified as a capital good if it is to be used by a factory or a restaurant but as a consumer good if it is sold to households. Customs officials have no idea about the uses of these items. Worse still is the fact that the fridge may start in an hotel and be later sold to a household or vice versa. This statistical dilemma is applicable to a variety of imports, such as cars, TV sets, computers, furniture, etc. Thus, capital goods imports are also compressible without jeopardising the investment process. And we have not yet talked about the imports of services (holidaying, medication and education abroad) which have a substantial luxury content.

The conclusion here is that economic growth can be greatly enhanced through the mere process of rationalising imports of goods and services. Boosting growth rates is a leading goal among those of the famous International Monetary Fund (IMF) sponsored adjustment programmes. It will be an irony if rationalisation of imports and elimination of the import-type waste are banned by these programmes.

Clearing landscape of politics

THE LOCAL political scene has been littered for some time now with speculation about an impending change of government. Many observers think that the change is imminent. Those who believe in the inevitability of change of the current premier, Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, attribute their reasoning to several upcoming domestic issues that would call for a caretaker government. Paramount on the list of those issues could be the fast approaching general elections, amendments to the existing electoral law and the controversial new sales tax. On the regional level, the direction of the peace process and its viability may also have a bearing on who will head the next government in the country.

There have been side effects to the speculation concerning the change, on top of which is the state of suspense that the Kingdom has had to grapple with so far. This wait-and-see political atmosphere is affecting not only the political and bureaucratic machineries in Jordan but also the economy. The sooner the suspense ends the better chance the people of Jordan stand to go back to business without unfounded fears or anxieties about the future.

On balance, the continuation of the incumbent prime minister in office would go a long way to restore normalcy and stability. It is of course up to His Majesty the King to decide, but one big plus in favour of Sharif Zeid is the fact that the first ever parliamentary elections under full conditions of democracy were held during his term of office in 1989. There can be no better person to supervise the next general elections than the same statesman who had conducted fair and free elections soon after the reintroduction of pluralistic democracy. The introduction of the value added tax on commodities and services may end up becoming unpopular due to the current state of the national economy. The sting of the new tax may tax the patience of the public and hurt any government. The responsibility for changes in the electoral policy and guidelines is also awesome and far-reaching. But as heavy as these responsibilities are, they require a seasoned statesman to shoulder them.

Maybe at the end of the day the primary issue that would determine the choice of the next prime minister is the course of the peace process. The success or failure of the peace talks in Washington would have a tremendous effect on the nature and composition of any new government in the country. Since it is much too early to judge the course of the peace negotiations between Israel and the various Arab parties, however, the Kingdom cannot wait for much longer before the state of suspense about the new government is ended. The rumour mill about the domestic political scene must be brought to a halt soon. And there is no better way to do it than to decide and act as soon as possible.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Tuesday said that representatives of the Palestinian people who came to congratulate His Majesty King Hussein on the 40th anniversary of his assuming constitutional powers reflected the feelings of the Palestinian people under Israeli rule. Their visit and their meeting with the King demonstrated the strong love for the Monarch and the strong bridges between the Jordanian and Palestinian people, said the daily. It said that the River Jordan can by no means separate the Jordanians and the Palestinians who have been bound firmly together throughout history. In addressing the visitors at the Royal Court, the King voiced his deep appreciation of the Palestinian people's endeavours to regain their rights and his deep pride in their steadfastness in the face of Israeli repression and continued occupation of Arab land, the paper continued. It said that Jordan, as the King has said, demands a peace that can be acceptable to the future generations and pledged that the Kingdom will remain steadfast alongside the Palestinians in their just struggle to regain their homeland. The King, added the paper, has always sought a just solution to the Middle East conflict and the Kingdom has never accepted any compromise over the Palestinian rights and will continue to back the Palestinians' endeavours at all costs.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily said that Israel is giving the Palestinians nothing in return for peace with the Arabs and continues to demand that the Arabs give it more concessions in return for nothing. By allowing the Palestinians to handle their own affairs in health, education, police matters and other municipal services, Israel is simply getting rid of the burden of spending on these services and paying the salaries of the employees who do the work, said Tareq Masarweh. Israel is adamant in its stand of not relinquishing any power to a really national Palestinian entity that can handle everything, said the writer. He said that the Palestinians demand full authority over their land and ask for full power to handle all the other affairs related to their land, health, security and everything else. The Palestinians should get their full rights, including self-determination, their own state and demand that all U.N. resolutions, including 799 and 242, be implemented in full to ensure the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied territories, continued the writer. He said that mere autonomy rule can never satisfy anyone and the Palestinians demand full sovereignty and nothing less than that.

Abdul Jawad Saleh, the deported mayor of Al Bireh and one of the 15 Palestinians who returned home on May 1, 1993, expounds the suffering of the Palestinians at the hands of the past victims of Nazi persecution.

In April 1943, Jurgen Stroop, a Nazi SS general, issued orders to his soldiers to "indiscriminately" kill the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto. Only five years later, in the same month of April, Menachem Begin, a wanted terrorist and the commander of the Irgun, ordered all the villagers of the defenceless Palestinian village of Deir Yassin to be eliminated despite the fact that David Shaltiel, the Haganah commander, noted that the village was never mentioned in "reports of attacks on Jews." A member of the Irgun organisation, cited by Jacques Reynier, the International Red Cross representative, said: "All I could think of was the SS troops I'd seen in Athens."

Reynier counted "150 bodies thrown into a cistern." In all he counted "254 dead, including 145 women, of whom 35 were pregnant." One survivor testified: "Bit by bit, Deir Yassin was submerged in a hell of screams, exploding grenades, the stench of blood, gunpowder and smoke. Its assailants killed, they looted, and finally they raped... they ripped our ears to pull (earrings) off faster." Another testified that, "a man shot a bullet in the neck of my sister Salhiyah, who was nine months pregnant. Then he cut her stomach open with a butcher's knife." The Irgun field commander congratulating his forces on the "wonderful operation of conquest," wrote: "As in Deir Yassin, so everywhere... Oh Lord, Oh Lord, you have chosen us for conquest."

With a few other "calculated massacres," the mass expulsion of the Palestinians was implemented, and the "Ghetto of Gaza," among others, was created. The solemn oath taken by the Jews, that "this will never happen again," was broken. Or was it an exclusive oath?

April 1993, fifty years later, some of those who were in Warsaw ghetto as young children, whose Pessah was often turned into tragedy, renewed the orders of General Jurgen Stroop, though in a different form and language. The Israeli cabinet decided to give civilians, to shoot at Palestinian "carrying arms, even those who present no immediate threat to life." The only outcome of such an order is the inevitable killing of young Palestinian women and men, and an increase in the number of maimed and blinded Palestinians.

As everybody knows, including Jewish colonisers in the occupied territories, Palestinian "terrorists" are not an army with a unified costume. Besides, the Israelis name children, just seven years old who in indignation and in defiance throw a stone, "terrorists."

Yitzhak Rabin's order implies that every Palestinian is a viable victim. A Jewish mother wrote to her son who serves in the "territories" advising him that he "must kill before being killed," to ensure his coming back to her safe.

The Israeli cabinet did not prescribe, unequivocally, indiscriminate killing; can it thus be called "human"? In fact, the modern articulation of Israeli orders serves the purpose of satisfying western taste. It proves, at least verbally, the compatibility of the orders with the Geneva Conventions. The reality of what is implemented on the ground does not concern the West.

The primary motivation behind the Fourth Geneva Convention was to prevent the recurrence, against any other people, of the measures taken against the Jews,

including those of the Warsaw ghetto. These included measures such as the deportation of hundreds of Polish Jews, stranding them in no man's land, fifty years ago; this was considered a war crime. Hitler considered these deportees to be "non-Aryans" and as such they were banished. The deportation of the 400 Palestinians, stranded in a 'no-man's land' in snow, in winter and among snakes in summer, is different. First, the Palestinians are not the old or the new Aryans, they are the Jews of the last decade of the twentieth century. The supreme and damning irony is that the 'new Aryans' are the Jews, the victims of 1943. These 'new Aryans' claim that Palestine should be exclusive for the Jews. In the modern-day jargon of justification for war crimes, the Palestinian expellees are dismissed as "Islamic fundamentalists."

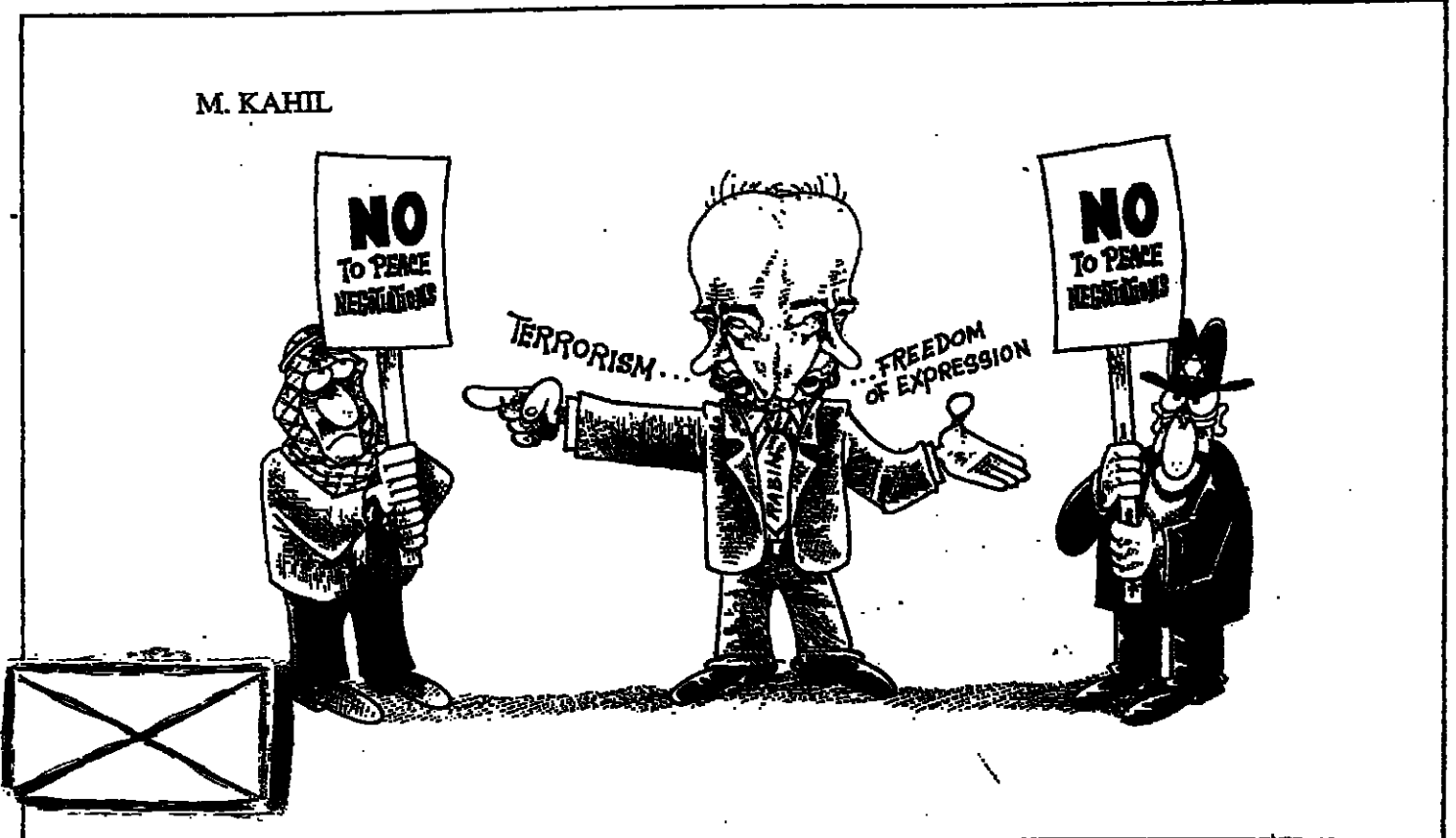
These Palestinians were not given two promises, one from a recognised God and one from Lord Balfour. Israel is considered as the realisation of God's prophecy. Of course this is a civilised fundamentalism. The Palestinians have been living on their land for millennia; many of their habits and customs, and the embroidery embellishing their

"Palestinians are not the old or the new Aryans, they are the Jews of the last decade of the twentieth century. The supreme and damning irony is that the 'new Aryans' are the Jews, the victims of 1943."

national costumes were inherited from their ancestors, the Canaanites and the Philistines, who inhabited the land before the Jews invaded it five thousand years ago. To be more objective, the comparison between the two ghettos is neither "right nor humane." For the Palestinians are not facing another Hitler or Nazism as Israel is "the only democracy" in the whole Middle East. Mr. Rabin was elected through a democratic process. And neither Zionism nor Israel professes or implements any racist or discriminatory laws. Look at the Law of Return! Does it discriminate between a Jew from the ex-Soviet Union or from Ethiopia? Does it discriminate between the people of David Levy and Benjamin Netanyahu?

The system of apartheid, which governs the relationship between Christian and Muslim Palestinians and which extends to the Druze, is different. Though they are indigenous, they are of a different category. They are goyim. Only "Jew-haters" ask for equality between them and the Israeli Jews. Only leftist Jews, who are "traitors" of Zionism, consider them equal citizens of the state.

There are no laws in Israel which discriminate against the non-Jewish minority living in Israel. For the Jews suffered greatly when they were minorities in the West. Have you not read about the condemnation by Jews



all over the world, including the Jewish colonisers of the occupied Palestinian territories, of the new German Nazis who burnt and attacked "foreigners" in their own cities?

A comparative study is not applicable. Land ownership in Israel is not discriminatory. Because God, according to Jewish fundamentalism, is a real estate foundation that granted land to his chosen people.

The truth is that only South Africa is racist, though lately the whites there have come to the conclusion that they should change. In Israel, they are not in need of such changes. Readers should be reminded of what all American presidents claim, that the cherished and shared values with Israel make the alliance between Israel and the United States a natural and desirable one. In fact, the terms of "Jewish ownership" of the land (non-Jews are not entitled to own land), and "Hebrew Labour" (non-Jews are not permitted to work on the land) are terms which first appeared in anti-semitic literature not in those documents of Jewish pioneers' foundations. But they only existed as verbal terms in the lexicon of Zionism. They were never implemented. These racist terms exist only in the terrorists' minds to defame Israel. For this reason, the United Nations repeated when it rescinded its resolution implying that "Zionism is racism."

Besides being a black page in the annals of history, as one people suffered at the hands of a psychopathic messianism of superiority, the Warsaw ghetto suffered many of the similar collective punishments currently being imposed on the Palestinian ghetto/ghettos: sieges, starvation, deprivation of education for children as well as adults, burning and banning of books, closures of schools, kindergartens and universities and deportations, not to death camps but into exile.

The two uprisings are also different though they share similar episodes. The Jews of the Warsaw ghetto were armed to the teeth and were supported by the Polish army which was opposing the Nazi occupation. The Palestinian ghetto of Gaza is barely armed and not supported by anyone. In fact they are deprived of their own people's money, "donated" by Palestinians working in the rich oil-producing countries. The Palestinians should be punished because they rejected Israel's "benign" occupation and expressed joy when the Scuds fell on Tel Aviv.

Fortunately, the Palestinian ghettos have so far not suffered the fate of the Warsaw ghetto. Nevertheless, the courage of the population of the two ghettos is

remarkably similar. The Jews of the Warsaw ghetto did not let a single tank out of the ghetto in one piece. Whilst the Palestinians do not have cannons to destroy tanks, they have stones which demoralise the strongest army in the Middle East and by being the brutalised innocent victims they are inflicting psychological destruction of the human being in the Israeli soldier. Moreover, these defenceless, starving Palestinians have been delineating the borders with their blood; borders which armies and their conquests could not preserve.

Both ghettos are similar in their confrontation of their region's most powerful armies. Both ghettos fought against all odds. (However, a small but important difference, the Palestinians are fighting with hope to win the battle.) In the Warsaw ghetto, a Jewish woman is reported to have leapt from a burning building to her death. In the Gaza ghetto, children leapt to their death from their schools and homes, avoiding suffocation from lethal gas bombs or the bombardment of their homes by anti-tank missiles. A young Palestinian girl, 8 years old, left her home in spite of the curfew imposed by the Israelis to fetch milk for her hungry younger brother, only to be shot dead. A medic who comes to give her aid is shot dead, too.

Of course, the troops in the Gaza ghetto are not the SS troops responsible for "cleansing" Warsaw of its Jewish ghetto. The Israeli cabinet has besieged the Gaza ghetto with the infamous undercover units, Shimshon and Duvdvan, death squads deployed to "shoot to kill" Palestinian activists. That is another difference. For General Stroop's mission was to ensure that "The Jewish quarter in Warsaw is no more," as his message to Hitler revealed. Not yet for the Gaza ghetto. Now it is a selective targeting. Not mentioning the hundreds of Palestinians who have been killed since the beginning of the intifada, the statistics about the victims of extra-judicial execution by the Israeli death squads are incomparable with the SS collective massacres. Nor is it yet like Deir Yassin or Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

The remarkable similarities between the two ghettos are manifest in the victimisation of the children. In Warsaw, you could have seen dead babies at the breast of their starving mothers. In Gaza, it is a daily, weekly or monthly affair to have dead babies at the breast, and dead fetuses in their mother's womb, as victims of the lethal gas canisters fired at maternity clinics. The Jewish children in their ghetto

"Right and wrong are the same in Palestine as anywhere else. What is peculiar about the Palestine conflict is that the world has listened to the party that committed the offence and has turned a deaf ear to the victim."

symbols of heroism.

A Jewish historian claims that the photo of a little boy raising high his hands in surrender to a Nazi storm-trooper pointing a gun at him "has come to symbolise the Holocaust in one photograph." Likewise, TV has captured Israeli soldiers breaking the bones of defenceless Palestinian children while their hands were fettered. Hundreds of other photos symbolise the Palestinian ghettos' uprising and show some of the comparisons with the Jewish children's involvement in the uprising against their occupation. But the Israeli political and military establishments accuse Palestinian parents of cowardice for sending their children to throw stones while they sit at home, and they deny the ramifications of their violence against Palestinian children, whose feelings of compassion and moral restraint are destroyed by the systematic brutalisation they endure.

As Dr. Sabella of Bethlehem University states, the Palestinian children throw the stones "because they are an integral part of the society and they have internalised their side of the conflict."

Elie Weisel, the Zionist writer and Nobel prize laureate, said of the Holocaust that we should not think of 6,000,000 victims because that becomes a statistic; we should think of one small child and of that child's death; that is the Holocaust. But what about the hundreds of Palestinian children killed and maimed since the

outbreak of the intifada? How have Jews everywhere permitted the Israeli government to carry out such a brutal policy against the Palestinian people, including children? The ugly statistics of human rights organisations are clear, yet they are castigated by Israel as either "anti-semitic" or done by "self-hating Jews." The Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem is vilified in the Israeli press, as is the Palestinian Human Rights Information Centre (PHRIC), which revealed in its report of 1992, that 28 per cent of those killed by the death squads were children aged 15-17.

Lots of similarities, paradoxes, and differences between the two ghettos exist. The spring of April was not noticed in Warsaw, nor is it now, fifty years later in Gaza. The indifference of the West in confronting the two uprisings of the two ghettos is stunning. In the Palestinian case, the West's indifference is preposterous and more cruel. The Canadians built a park, named after their country, on the ruins of the Palestinian village of Amwas which was razed to the ground by the Israeli army, five years after the elimination of the Warsaw ghetto. Amwas was an ancient town rooted in history. The trees of Canada park are ever green for they are living on the flesh and bones of the Palestinian dead.

The United States and Great Britain share historic and contemporary guilt for the tragedy which has befallen the Palestinian people. They have also been instrumental in supporting the Israeli state financially and politically, allowing it to act with impunity. Nazi Germany bears the guilt of the devil's worst crime, which acted as a catalyst for the Palestinians' ongoing tragedy.

The human mind cannot comprehend how the Jews, remembering what happened to them, could do the same to others. Again, it is hateful to compare between the tragedies of the two ghettos. The consummation of human tragedies, pain, suffering and even love is incomparable. Not only because human passions and emotions are immeasurable, but because some people try to abuse the sanctity of the dead to the extent of blackmailing nations to collect money and lethal equipment and to silence voices which might criticise the wrongdoing, by the victim of past tragedies, against "minorities."

As Dr. Arnold Toynbee has stated: "Right and wrong are the same in Palestine as anywhere else. What is peculiar about the Palestine conflict is that the world has listened to the party that committed the offence and has turned a deaf ear to the victim."

Brotherhood studying options

(Continued from page 1)

Dr. Farhan said it will be unwise of the executive to amend or change the current elections law, saying that if there "were any new ideas" they should be presented to Parliament whose mandate runs till mid-November.

Infamous Muslim Brotherhood Deputy Hameed Mansour (Amman) said his group will oppose any amendments to the election law, echoing Dr. Farhan in saying that any change would have to be endorsed by the Lower House whose fourth and last ordinary session ended on March 31.

Dr. Farhan and Mr. Mansour insisted that legislators should be recalled for an extraordinary session if a change in the law was forthcoming. Mr. Mansour argued that it will be unconstitutional to issue a temporary legislation amending the law because the Constitution limited the practice to cases of emergency which, he said, does not apply to the election law.

"We will not accept that a government takes advantage of the House's recess to issue new legislation," he said.

A senior government official told the Jordan Times that the Brotherhood had offered the government a deal under which it would not campaign for increasing its seats in the House in return for a government commitment not to change the elections law.

The official, who spoke to the Jordan Times on condition of anonymity, did not say what the government's response to the offer was, but added that some cabinet members advised the prime minister against it because there would be no guarantee that the movement would not support candidates who do not officially belong to it but who would support its policies in the next Parliament.

Muslim Brotherhood members denied the report, which could not be confirmed by other cabinet members.

There has been no such offer, said Brotherhood leader Abdul Rahman Khalifeh. "For increasing its seats in the House," he told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview.

Mr. Mansour, however, said that the movement, which has 23 members in the House, is not aiming for an absolute majority in the 80-member legislature.

"We do not want to have a monopoly on the House," he said, adding that the Brotherhood, whose candidates will contest the next elections under the IAF umbrella, believes other sectors of society should be represented in the House.

Nor is the movement aiming for an immediate implementation of Islamic Sharia, said Mr. Mansour. "We believe in gradualism. We know that big leaps are fraught with danger," he said citing a

"pledge" by Mr. Badran at the opening of the first session of Parliament in January 1990 that Jordan would move towards the application of Islamic Sharia. Mr. Badran in that year signed a 14-point deal with the Brotherhood in order to gain its support for his government.

"Every step we make is carefully studied and there is no need to rush into things," he said. Change towards the application of Sharia, which he described as a culture for all Muslim and non-Muslim Jordanians, should be incremental, he said.

Observers believe the Brotherhood would not seek an absolute majority in the House in the next elections because such a step would undermine its overall policy of gradually consolidating its power without alarming government or members of society who fear the rise of radical Islam in the country.

But other observers and officials believe that the movement cannot possibly gain a majority in the House anyway, and as such all talk of a necessary deal between the Islamists and the regime is out of place.

If the Brotherhood could obtain a majority in Parliament and pushed for Islamic law, it would run the risk of confrontation with the regime, eventually undermining the whole democratic process, some analysts believe. If it could attain that majority but refrains from doing that, on the other hand, it would lose credibility with

its constituency which supported its Islamic platform, those analysts say.

Mr. Mansour rejected this argument saying his movement wants to see all shades of Jordan's political spectrum represented in the House with no one party dominating the others.

"What we are extremely, very extremely, concerned with is the stability of the country," he said. Many Jordanians believe that a change in the elections law, which now gives voters as many votes as the number of candidates in their precincts, could work to the disadvantage of the Brotherhood.

A large turnout by the Brotherhood supporters in the 1989 elections and a strong commitment to the movement's candidates enabled it to form alliances and obtain a number of seats disproportionate to the percentage of the popular vote it won then.

"Accordingly, a one-man-one-vote system is widely expected to weaken the Brotherhood and send more independent candidates to the House."

Dr. Farhan, however, contended that the Islamist Action Front can deal with all developments, and its opposition to amending the law is rooted in its rejection of bypassing the House and the confusion of hurried changes rather than in the fear of a weaker performance in the elections.

"The front is ready for all developments," he said. "But to avoid any constitutional differences over one of the most important laws of democracy, the law should not be changed."

Rabin and Peres differ in public

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Peres had said that "ultimately a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation will be established from a political point of view." He said an economic framework would be established to incorporate

all three partners: Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians.

Mr. Peres has also urged discussion now of the final status of the occupied territories, even before agreement is reached at the Middle East peace talks on an interim period of autonomy.

King urges increased exchange of views

(Continued from page 1)

The meeting, the second of its kind in a row, is held under the patronage of and chaired by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

Addressing the opening session, Prince Hassan called on the Muslims to follow the footsteps of good ancestors and be open to the changes and developments of the age.

He also called on them to spread the good word and to prepare the generations to assume an informed and effective role in lifting the Islamic Nation from the era of underdevelopment to the spacious scopes of

progress. He noted that the Islamic heritage of jurisprudence enjoys a unique practical and comprehensive perspective, particularly in areas of zakat (alms) and care for orphans. Such a perspective can serve as a basis for a supportive and united society, he pointed out.

Many of the Islamic economic practices are proved very effective and powerful in meeting the needs of contemporary Islamic communities, he noted.

Taking part in the symposium are ulema from Oman, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Senegal, Morocco and Jordan in addition to representatives from the London-based Al Imam Al Khouri Foundation.

Sales tax may be delayed

(Continued from page 1)

members of the government of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker are members of parliament. Most, if not all of them, are expected to seek reelection in the next polls and thus have to leave the cabinet.

The ministers of finance and planning — leading players in the so-called economic team within the Cabinet — are the main force in support of the sales tax, which comes in line with Jordan's economic restructuring programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Minister of Finance Basel Jandach and Minister of Planning Ziyad Fariz are technocrats with no electorate to satisfy. They are credited with guiding the Kingdom's economy towards recovery over the past five years, and are seen as strongly committed to maintaining Jordan's record of strict adherence to the IMF programme.

In addition, the tax is expected to raise up to JD 125 million and thus contribute to the government's drive to boost revenues and cut expenditure (see page 3).

The issue assumes particular significance to the economic team since an IMF certification of Jordan's implementation of the programme is essential to clear the way for the Kingdom to reschedule its foreign debts. Rescheduling negotiations are coming up next month with the Paris Club of creditor governments and the Kingdom needs up to \$500 million for immediate debt repayments if no agreement is secured.

Minister of Industry and Trade Abdullah Ensour, another key member of the economic team, is a technocrat-turned-politician and he has made little public comment on the sales tax, most probably because he plans to seek reelection from his Salt constituency.

The whole issue of sales tax is highly sensitive and controversial," said a senior official. "There are strong reasons that warrant the imposition of the tax, but there is also a strong opposition to it."

The senior official, who did not want to be identified by name, lamented "the fact that many officials are convinced that the issue was not presented in its proper context" to the public. "If it had been well presented with the necessary explanations and clarifications, there would not have been so much opposition to it," he said.

The Cabinet was scheduled to discuss the issue during its regular session on Tuesday evening. But none of these interviewed officials would say with any degree of accuracy what lay in store for the draft law.

"It is possible that a decision be taken to defer the sales tax until after the expected Cabinet reshuffle," said the senior official. "But nothing is clear, and it will be

premature to make any judgement at this point in time."

In the meantime, the industrial sector says it has presented its case to the government in its continuing battle against the sales tax and is awaiting positive action in response to complaints of its grievances.

Numerous meetings have been held between government officials and the private industrial sector represented by the Chamber of Industry, and the draft temporary law on sales tax has undergone some changes but no final compromise has been worked out.

"The sales tax in its present form is unacceptable," said Ali Dajani, who is an advisor at the Chamber of Industry. "It will adversely affect the industrial sector since higher prices will mean lower consumption, particularly at a time when Jordan needs a boost in industrial production."

The Chamber of Industry released advertisements in the local press last week informing the public of its opposition to the law and offering legal, technical and socio-economic reasons to support its case.

In addition, the chamber has also sent a cable to Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker appealing for his intervention.

Essentially, the Chamber of Industry, "which understands the government's commitment to the IMF programme and the inevitability of the tax," is seeking to delay the imposition of the sales tax until after closer studies are made on its impact on Jordanian industries as well as the socio-economic condition in the country, Mr. Dajani said.

A delegation of economic experts studied the Egyptian experience with the imposition of a similar sales tax and came up with the finding that it resulted in higher market prices and inflation and lower investments and economic activities, according to the Chamber of Industry.

One of the key arguments of the industrial sector is that the application of the sales tax cannot be equitable and it also undermines the interest of local industries. The tax will be levied at the factory selling price for local products — which includes wages, manufacturing expenses and profits — while imported products will be taxed at cost price.

This will allow imported products to gain a marked edge and lead to a situation where Jordanian-made products have to compete with foreign equivalents in the local market, the Chamber of Industry argues.

Amid the confusion, local traders and consumers have reportedly been hoarding many products expected to be covered under the sales tax.

Israeli-Palestinian track serious

(Continued from page 1)

House — but separately. Mr. Clinton, said one official, would invite all the delegation heads to come together — just like Mr. Christopher did last week.

Arabs were to decide Tuesday whether to extend Middle East peace negotiations into next week.

Syria, Jordan and Lebanon see little, if any, progress in their talks with Israel, but Arab diplomats said they would probably decide Tuesday to stay another week if Palestinians wanted to extend the talks.

Israel has already said it agrees with a U.S. proposal to make the peace talks continuous from now

on, in order to speed up the peace process and avoid repeated bouts of bargaining over whether the Palestinians are going to attend or not.

Since the triumphant return of a first group of 15 long-term exiles on Friday, the Palestinians have been saying they feel they are finally achieving results after 18 months of largely sterile haggling.

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U.N. policeman killed, 8 hurt in suspected Khmer Rouge ambush

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — A Japanese policeman with the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Cambodia was killed and three were wounded along with five Dutch Marines Tuesday when suspected Khmer Rouge guerrillas attacked their convoy with rockets and assault rifles in northeast Cambodia, U.N. and Japanese officials said.

"It has been established this was a deliberate attack against UNTAC," U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia spokesman Eric Falt said.

Inspector Hanyuri Takata, 32, was killed on the spot, Mr. Falt said, but a Japanese embassy official in Bangkok said two other Japanese were conscious after treatment for wounds in the Royal Thai Air Force hospital where they had been taken by helicopter along with four of the Marines.

There was no immediate word on the condition of the Dutch in Bangkok.

Two U.N. electoral workers from Norway and several Indian mine clearers were in the convoy but escaped uninjured, Mr. Falt said.

Mr. Takata's death was the first fatality among Japanese security forces serving in Cambodia, and it was certain to bring pressure on Tokyo to review its peacekeeping role in the country.

The midday attack near Ampil in the resistance zone near the Thai border — which is controlled politically by the FUNCINPEC party but militarily by the Khmer Rouge — occurred as the armed Dutch soldiers were leading a convoy of six vehicles, Mr. Falt said.

"A group of unidentified armed men fired a B-40 (rocket) round on the lead vehicle before opening fire on the convoy with (automatic weapons)," he said.

U.N. officials said the Khmer Rouge were suspected of the attack, and Mr. Falt compared it with an ambush Monday blamed on the Khmer Rouge in eastern Kompong Cham province which left five Indian peacekeepers injured.

Apart from 75 policemen, Japan also has 600 troops in Cambodia, mainly on engineering work away from danger zones. They were sent after a fierce domestic debate and a change in the law to allow the deployment of Japanese military overseas for the first time since World War II.

On April 22 Japanese deputy Defence Minister Arira Hiroyoshi has quoted as saying in Kuala Lumpur that political pressures would force Tokyo to review its peacekeeping role in Cambodia if any of its personnel were killed or injured.

The ambush came one day after the Khmer Rouge attacked the northern tourist city of Siem Reap, briefly holding the airport before being repulsed by Phnom Penh government troops. They also exchanged fire with U.N. troops.

In Monday's ambush in Kompong Cham four Indians were lightly wounded by shrapnel, while a fifth had his leg amputated.

The Khmer Rouge ambushed the convoy of three vehicles with rocket-propelled grenades and assault rifles for about 10 to 15 minutes, he said.

"The Indian troops retaliated very vigorously," Mr. Falt said, with six rounds of 60mm mortar plus 300 rounds of automatic weapon and machine-gun fire.

The Kompong Cham attack occurred in the same district and in the same manner in which a Colombian civilian police officer was killed Friday night. The United Nations has not assessed blame for that attack.

Prince Sihanouk issued a statement Tuesday condemning the resurgence of factional warfare in his homeland and warning that the nation's very existence is at stake.

"Our Cambodia will not survive unless my armed compatriots agreed to reconcile their difference and achieve a complete peace among them," Prince Sihanouk said in the statement, faxed to news organisations.

"The problems which divide them at the moment can and must be resolved by peaceful means. They must agree to send me competent representatives to try, together and with my help, to find good solutions to these problems."

Trial is a farce — ex-east German spymaster.

DUESSELDORF, Germany (AFP) — East Germany's spymaster Markus Wolf went on trial here Tuesday, and immediately went on the offensive, lashing the proceedings as a farce and challenging the court to prove any charges against him.

He launched the attack after hearing prosecutors read a dozen charges of treason and corruption, listing famous cases that were a rollcall of Mr. Wolf's success during 33 years as espionage chief.

Among them was the case of Guenter Guillaume, a mole who penetrated west German Chancellor Willy Brandt's office and triggered his downfall in 1974, and Gabriele Gast, a top-level double agent imbedded in the west German secret service.

Mr. Wolf, 70, sun-tanned and dressed in a smart grey suit, then hit at the accusations as "absurd" and "legally untenable."

"Which state am I supposed to have betrayed?" he asked, sarcasm dripping off his tongue.

He pointed out that during the cold war, both east Germany and west Germany gave legal protection to their spying services. As a former citizen of the German Democratic Republic (GDR, East Germany), Mr. Wolf said, he should be tried under the laws that pertained in that country at the time.

If convicted, Mr. Wolf faces between one year and up to life in prison.

Mr. Wolf's lawyers tried in vain to have the trial suspended until the Federal Constitutional Court, Germany's top legal authorities, rules on a test case involving Mr. Wolf's successor as head of the east German foreign espionage service, Werner Grossmann.

That case was referred to the top federal judges by a Berlin state court, which said under German law, German citizens are entitled to equal treatment. It



East Germany's legendary spy Markus Wolf awaits the opening of his trial for espionage and rumours that may reveal potentially explosive secrets (AFP photo)

Mr. Wolf admitted that he felt compelled to question his past role in the east German Communist system, "but not under the auspices of this court."

Some high-powered support for Mr. Wolf came, meanwhile, from one of his former adversaries: the ex-head of west German counter-espionage, Heribert Hellenbroich.

"Wolf did in the name of his state what every state in the world does, namely spying, just like the Federal Republic's secret service does," Mr. Hellenbroich said in an interview published Tuesday in the Cologne paper Express. "I don't understand what is so punishable about that."

On the eve of his trial, Mr. Wolf said he could not count on fair proceedings and hinted at revealing embarrassing secrets if he felt persecuted.

He said that he and his lawyers had prepared "surprises," although "one has to wait and see."

Mr. Wolf, according to reports the model for the spy chief Karla in John Le Carre's novels, ran east Germany's foreign espionage from 1953 to 1987, when he resigned for reasons that are still unclear.

As head of the Main Administration for Information, the foreign-espionage wing of the Ministry of State Security (Stasi), Mr. Wolf was in charge of a network of thousands of spies, many of them implanted in the west German fabric of government and economy as "sleeper" agents.

He was so effective that the east German leader Erich Honecker reportedly read the weekly espionage digest of west German intelligence before Chancellor Helmut Kohl did. But he was also such a shadowy figure that the West first gained proof of his existence in 1979, when a defector identified a photo of him.

Eighty-eight witnesses have been called to the trial, which is expected to end in late June.

Princess Margaret's son to marry

LONDON (AP) — Princess Margaret's 31-year-old son Viscount Linley, a successful furniture designer, is to marry Serena Alleyne Stanhope, Viscount Linley, nephew of Queen Elizabeth II and 12th in line to the British throne, is the son of Princess Margaret and her former husband, the photographer Lord Snowdon. Viscount Linley, who runs a cabinet-making business in Chelsea, southwest London, met the 23-year-old daughter of Viscount Petersham several years ago when Viscount Petersham commissioned him to make some furniture. Viscount Petersham, son and heir of the 11th Earl of Harrington, issued a statement announcing the engagement of "Viscount Linley, son of Her Royal Highness the Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, and the Honorable Serena Stanhope, daughter of Viscount Petersham and Virginia, Viscountess Petersham, to which union Her Majesty the Queen has gladly given her consent." "The wedding is to be held in London in the autumn. No date or venue has been decided upon at this stage," the announcement said.

Men look their best at thirty-something

SEOUL (R) — South Korean men consider they look their best at the age of 34, but women prefer their men's looks at 31, a survey showed. A local research company, polling 461 men and 155 women, disclosed that men were at their healthiest at the age of 29 but at their most courteous and generous at 46. Two-thirds of the men polled thought they could best improve their appearance by buying a new suit, 11 per cent opted for a haircut and only five per cent thought skin care cosmetics would best benefit them.

Thai elephants hooked on 'speed'

BANGKOK (R) — At least 30 Thai elephants have become amphetamine addicts because their handlers feed them "speed" to get more work out of them, a Bangkok newspaper reported Tuesday. The mass-circulation Thai Rath reported from an elephant rehabilitation centre in northern Thailand that some of the elephants were seriously ill or malnourished because of the addiction. "Many of them go crazy when they need the drug," an official of the Animal Protection Foundation that runs the centre told the newspaper. The elephants became addicted to amphetamine after their handlers laced their food with the drug to get them to work longer hours. Many elephants are used in the logging industry. Amphetamines, informally called "pep pills, speed or uppers," stimulate the central nervous system and are frequently used by long-haul truck drivers in Thailand.

China opens late enemy's villa to tourists

PEKING (R) — China has renovated and opened to tourists the former villa of its late enemy, Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek, in an apparent gesture before the Communists drove the general and his army into exile in Taiwan in 1949, is one of the best preserved sites of the period, the Liaoning Daily said. Chiang's ancestral home in Zhejiang province was revamped and made into a tourist attraction a few years ago. The renovation of the Chiang residences is seen as an olive branch to Nationalists in Taiwan. Peking considers the island a breakaway province and wants to bring it under mainland control.

Number of Japanese children 'dwindling'

TOKYO (R) — The number of Japanese under 15 years old fell by about half a million to 21,100,000 in the year to April 1, according to a government survey published by Kyodo News Agency. Reflecting the rapid greying of Japanese society, under-15s dwindled to less than 17 per cent of the country's total population down half a percentage point from the year before, the survey said. The survey, conducted by the Management and Coordination Agency, was released to mark Japan's Children's Day Wednesday, which is a national holiday. The proportion of children as a percentage of total population has been on a decline since 1975, Kyodo said. Among the main industrial nations, only Germany and Italy had a smaller percentage of the population under 15. Kyodo said

Sri Lanka police make 1st arrest over killing of president

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka's police made their first arrest Tuesday in connection with the assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa as Prime Minister Dingiri Banda Wijetunga was set to take over as head of state.

Detective Superintendent Lionel Gunatilake said police were questioning a man they believe was closely linked to the suspected Tamil Tiger guerrilla who carried out Saturday's suicide bombing at a May Day rally here.

Police named the arrested man as K. Saman Sujewa, a grocer from the majority Sinhalese community.

"We brought this man (Sujewa) in this morning and we hope he will be able to throw some light on the case. We are in the process of interrogating him," Mr. Gunatilake said.

He said Mr. Sujewa was believed to be the "contact man" for the attacker who blew Mr. Premadasa to pieces and killed 23 other people, including seven policemen forming the inner circle of presidential bodyguards.

The arrest came as parliament met briefly to set Friday as the day to choose a new president from among his MPs.

Mr. Wijetunga, who has been serving as acting president since Mr. Premadasa's death, is almost certain to get the job unopposed for the 19 months remaining on his predecessor's tenure.

Parliament Secretary-General Nihal Senewiratne announced that Friday would be the date for receiving nominations for president. Mr. Premadasa's United Nations Party (UNP) has said Mr. Wijetunga was its candidate.

The UNP has 125 members in the 225-legislative assembly and in the event of an opposition member of parliament entering the fray a ballot should be held within 28 hours.

Mr. Wijetunga has already vowed to continue Mr. Premadasa's economic policies and said there should be no cause for concern among foreign and local investors or the business community.

Dozens of police commandos searched the parliament chamber ahead of Tuesday's sitting while security forces and police deployed in the capital remained on a maximum alert to prevent a backlash to the slaying.

Hundreds of thousands of mourners have been pouring into the capital to pay respects to Mr. Premadasa whose sealed coffin was moved from his private residence overnight to the colonial-style presidential palace in downtown Colombo Fort.

Meanwhile, Tamil sources said Mr. Premadasa's assassin was a Tamil youth who had come to Colombo two years ago from the island's northern Jaffna peninsula, where the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas are active.

Pro-government Tamil groups said the assassin seemed to have had access to Mr. Premadasa's private home, which is usually open to all ruling party supporters as well as constituents of the president's Colombo Central electorate.

Detective Gunatilake said police were yet to firmly establish the identity of the killer but initial reports suggested that he may have been running the grocery store for Mr. Sujewa.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

2 groups claim S. African attack

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Two black guerrilla movements made conflicting claims of responsibility for the killing of five whites, but political leaders of both groups said they knew nothing about the attacks. Amid the confusing claims, police continued searching Tuesday for suspects in Saturday's mass shooting at a hotel bar in the southern coastal city of East London. Police say the latest attack was strikingly similar to others that have targeted white civilians in the region. The Pan Africanist Congress' military wing has claimed responsibility for several previous shootings. And a man who said he was a leader of the PAC's military wing called a Johannesburg newspaper Monday night to say his group carried out the latest attack. But earlier in the day, an unidentified phone caller told the South African Press Association that a guerrilla group linked to the Azanian People's Liberation Organisation (AZAPO) launched the attack. To complicate matters, political leaders of both organisations said they had no knowledge of their armed wings taking part in the killings.

Alaskans used in cold war tests

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (R) — A senator has confirmed that the U.S. government subjected more than 100 Alaskan villagers to radioactive drugs in the 1950s as part of an experiment on whether soldiers could be dosed to survive better in Arctic conditions. Frank Murkowski told government scientists meeting here that he had called for a federal investigation into the experiment, in which Eskimos and Indians were given radioactive drugs without their knowledge. The experiment was aimed at finding out whether soldiers could be better conditioned for Arctic temperatures. It came to light recently when Sen. Murkowski's staff, tipped off by villagers' rumours, dug up a 1957 U.S. Air Force document. "It may turn out that this is a case where there were no human risks — but the burden of proof, I think, is with those responsible for the experiments, namely our federal government," Sen. Murkowski, a Republican senator for Alaska, said at the start of a week-long interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee meeting.

Ex-communists to quit Rome cabinet

ROME (R) — One of three ex-communists in the new Italian government said Tuesday he was quitting and that the other two would follow suit, dashing Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi's hopes they would reconsider their walkout. Universities and Research Minister Luigi Berlinguer quoted Mr. Ciampi as saying he wanted the representatives of the ex-Communist Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) to stay in his new cabinet and expressed regret at the decision. "Ciampi expressed regret and said he would have liked us to stay," Mr. Berlinguer said in an interview with RAI-3 state television after meeting the prime minister Tuesday. The other two PDS cabinet members are Finance Minister Vincenzo Visco and Augusto Barbera, in charge of relations with parliament.

Pakistan sacks intelligence chief

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Lieutenant General Javed Nasir, who led Pakistan's powerful military intelligence agency under deposed Premier Nawaz Sharif, has been fired, a Defence Ministry official said Tuesday. Gen. Nasir was removed from active service Monday after leading the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) for 13 months. He has already been replaced by Lieutenant General Javed Ashraf, 51, who assumed the office of director general of ISI Monday, the official said. Sources here said Gen. Nasir was fired six months ahead of expected retirement. The firing came two weeks after the sacking of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the dissolution of the National Assembly by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan in the wake of a bitter power tussle. Gen. Nasir was considered close to Mr. Sharif, whose attempts to clip the presidency's sweeping powers led to his government dismissal on April 18.

White House backs down in war of words

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House backed down in a war of words between President Bill Clinton and the Senate's most powerful Republican, who is accusing it of telling "a \$2 million lie" about him. The White House said the Democratic president made a mistake at a White House correspondents' dinner Saturday night when he accused Republican Senator Robert Dole of seeking \$23 million from Mr. Clinton's proposed \$16.3 billion economic stimulus package even while he was fighting to prevent the measure from passing through the Senate. Mr. Clinton said that in case the bill passed, Sen. Dole sought federal funds to convert a senior citizen's home in Kansas, his home state, into a boathouse. In the end, the bill never made it through the Senate. The statement from White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos said that "while Senator Dole did make the case that the Wichita Boathouse is a legitimate (community development block grant) project, the potential cost to the taxpayers is not as high as stated in the president's joke." Sen. Dole had earlier reacted angrily to Mr. Clinton's remark, saying, "the Clinton administration really missed the boat on this one. It's a \$23 million lie and there's no way the White House can defend it."

WHO expels former Yugoslavia

GENEVA (AP) — The World Health Organisation (WHO) opened its annual conference by voting overwhelmingly to expel the former Yugoslavia. Only Russia, a traditional Serb ally, and Zimbabwe joined the Yugoslav delegation in opposing expulsion from the U.N. agency. The decision is part of U.N. sanctions imposed since May on Serb-dominated Yugoslavia for supporting ethnic Serbs in the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Similar expulsions have been made by other U.N. organisations. Branko Brankovic, Yugoslavia's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, described the 125-3 vote, with 26 abstentions, as a "crime against my people."

U.S. embassy employee held on spy charge

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI Monday accused an American employee of the U.S. embassy in Athens of spying but did not disclose details of the charges.

The employee, Steven Lalas, 40, of Dover, N.H., was held without bail after a brief federal court hearing in Alexandria, Va. He was advised of his rights by U.S. Magistrate Barry Poretz, who will hold another hearing Wednesday to determine whether there is probable cause to continue to hold Mr. Lalas without bond.

The contents of an affidavit detailing the charges against him were not made public.

The FBI said it arrested Mr. Lalas Friday in northern Virginia just outside of Washington, D.C.

State Department officials who requested anonymity said Mr. Lalas, a communications officer, had top secret clearance with access to cables assessing U.S. policy toward Greece.

The FBI is trying to determine whether Mr. Lalas began his alleged espionage activity in Greece or had already started while in Turkey on a previous tour, said an official who spoke only on condition of anonymity.

Among the material he would have had access to at both postings is cable traffic relating to NATO, in which both Turkey and Greece are members, said the official. While both are U.S. allies, Greece and Turkey are historic rivals.

New York Newsday reported that Mr. Lalas also had access to voluminous cable traffic concerning the situation in Bosnia and other parts of former Yugoslavia. The FBI refused to say whether Mr. Lalas is accused of passing secret information to the Greek government or Greek intelligence.

He said fresh fighting erupted in four small towns in the Imphal Valley Tuesday in which at least 13 people were killed. At least 308 people had been injured.

Texas cult children tell of abuse

NEW YORK (AP) — Children in the Branch Davidian cult compound said they were padded for trifling sins, told to call their parents "dogs" and that some girls were sexually abused by cult leader David Koresh, a newspaper reported.

The children, who left the compound during the siege by federal agents that began on Feb. 28, told social workers that Mr. Koresh gave girls as young as 11 plastic stars of David that signified they were ready to have sex with him, the New York Times reported Tuesday.

The Times quoted from the report of a team headed by Dr. Bruce D. Perry, chief of psychiatry at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston. The team interviewed 19 of the 21 surviving children of the cult, ages 4 to 11.

Karen Eells, regional director of the Texas Child's Protective Services Division, had said previously that the children had shown no signs of physical abuse. The Associated Press was unable to reach Ms. Eells late Monday.

The Times quoted Dr. Perry as saying several of the girls released from the compound had circular lesions on their buttocks that probably were caused by paddling.

Dr. Perry told the Times that the children were reluctant to divulge the cult's secrets at first. "Over the course of two months, the kids became increasingly open about 11- and 12-year-old girls being David's wives," he said.

Seoul warns of sanctions against North

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korean Deputy Prime Minister Han Wang-Saung said Tuesday economic sanctions against Pyongyang would be "inevitable" if North Korea did not return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Neighbouring countries suspect North Korea of developing nuclear arsenal.

The U.N. Security Council was expected to issue its first resolution on North Korea's NPT withdrawal as early as Friday, Yonhap said.

Officials have said a second,

Mr. Han's was the first call for sanctions by a high-ranking South Korean official. Seoul said previously it wanted to negotiate a settlement to avoid further isolating the reclusive Stalinist state.

North Korea in March warned it would take "defensive countermeasures" if the world community imposed economic sanctions against it.

China, its sole remaining Communist mentor, has so far used its clout as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council to block sanctions.

"We are still keeping our fingers crossed," he said. "We can only hope the trouble does not spread to other areas. At the moment we can barely control the areas affected by the trouble with the forces we have."

What it means is unclear at this point. Although Mr. Koresh's body was found alone, all six cult members identified publicly by authorities had been shot in the head.

Mr. Jamar would not speculate whether that was chance or trend. "Some people may have been trying to get out," Mr. Jamar said. "Maybe they were shot."

Los Angeles Police Chief Willie L. Williams, an attorney and a journalism professor, was selected Monday to review the government's internal investigation of the initial assault in February on the Branch Davidian cult.

Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen said the three-member panel will offer guidance to the Treasury Department investigation, review its findings and assess the final report.

In addition to Chief Williams, the other two members of treasury's review panel are Henry S. Ruth Jr. and Edwin O. Guthman. Mr. Ruth, the former chief Watergate prosecutor, served on the commission that examined police actions in the fatal standoff in Philadelphia with the MOVE cult.

Mr. Guthman, a Pulitzer Prize winner, was national editor of the Los Angeles Times and editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer before joining the University of Southern California.

Preliminary findings showed Mr. Koresh died of a gunshot

100 die in Indian Hindu-Muslim clashes

GUWAHATI, India (R) — Fresh Hindu-Muslim clashes erupted in northeast India Tuesday, taking the death toll to two days of rioting to almost 100, police said.

Eighty-five bodies were found after Monday's violence in and around the Manipur state capital Imphal, said state police chief Alfred Liddle.

He said fresh fighting erupted in four small towns in the Imphal Valley Tuesday in which at least 13 people were killed. At least 308 people had been injured.

Most victims were stabbed or burnt alive, chief Liddle said. Some were killed by locally-made pistols.

Most of the victims were Muslims, who make up 10 per cent of the state's 1.6 million people, officials said. They said 18 women and seven children were among the dead.

"This is the worst violence Manipur has seen," said State Chief Minister R.K. Dorendra Singh. He said the federal government had been asked to rush in 2,000 soldiers because local police

could not cope. "We have reasons to be worried and we hope New Delhi will take us seriously," he said.

Chief Liddle said about 6,000 para-military local troops were pressed into law-and-order duties along with the 12,000-strong state police.

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